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gfiles
INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

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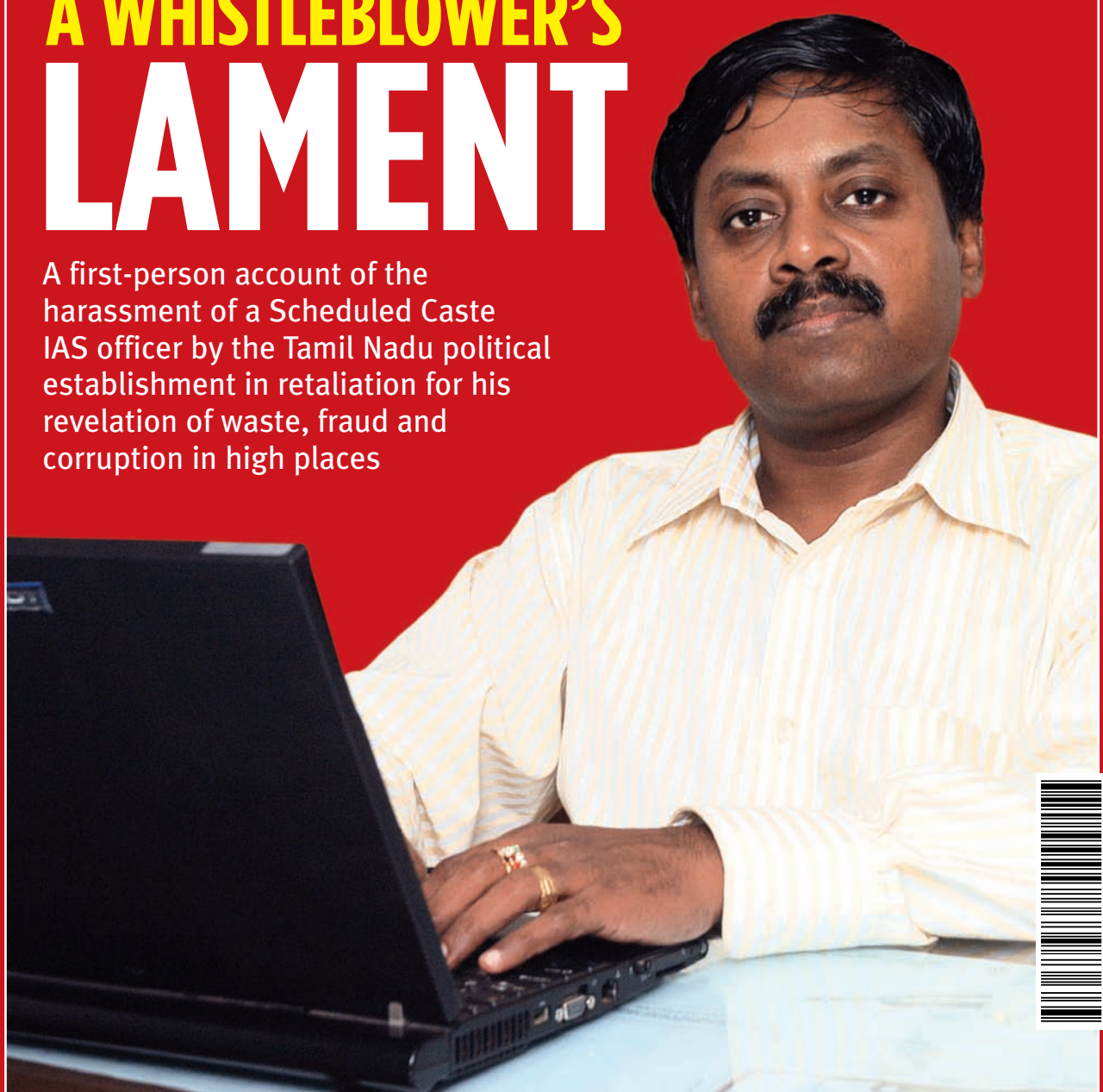
A WHISTLEBLOWER'S LAMENT

A first-person account of the harassment of a Scheduled Caste IAS officer by the Tamil Nadu political establishment in retaliation for his revelation of waste, fraud and corruption in high places



0976-2906

Smt. Sonia Gandhi
President, UPA

Dr. Manmohan Singh
Prime Minister

HARYANA

NURTURING THE GIRL CHILD

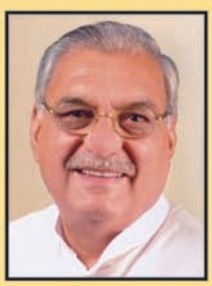
Schemes Implemented For The Welfare Of The Girl Child

- Under **'Ladli Social Security Allowance Scheme'**, a monthly pension of Rs. 500 is given to those parents, who have only girl child or children, from the 45th birthday of the mother or the father whosoever is older. This benefit will continue till the beneficiary attains the age of 60 years after which they would be entitled to Old Age Allowance.
- An incentive based scheme **'Ladli'** has been introduced by the State Government to combat the problem of female foeticide. Under the scheme, which is applicable August 20, 2005 onwards, on the birth of second daughter Rs. 5000 per year are given to the new born girl and her mother for five years.

The Haryana Government is committed towards the betterment of women.

Deeply concerned about the adverse sex-ratio, the State Government has taken a number of initiatives to arrest this trend. Many incentive based schemes have been implemented to bring about a constructive change in the mindset of the people and to impart dignity to the girl child. An environment is being created so that a girl child can achieve her potential.

Bhupinder Singh Hooda
Chief Minister, Haryana



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PERHAPS one of the most important Bills to be tabled in Parliament after Cabinet approval in August is the proposed law seeking to protect whistleblowers from official retaliation. After the RTI (Right to Information) legislation, this Bill, if passed in the right spirit and without any emasculation, will be equal in import. It will be another vital blow in support of good governance and Best Government practices.

In summary, the measure will authorize the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) to ensure that it protects the identity of citizens and government officials who expose fraud, waste and mismanagement in high places. While trying to insulate the system against frivolous complaints through disciplinary action against those who make them, the Bill simultaneously seeks to empower the CVC to punish those who either reveal the identity of or retaliate against whistleblowers.

The retaliation has often been bloody. Manjunath Shanmugam and Satyendra Dubey were murdered. Dubey, an IIT Kanpur civil engineering graduate, paid with his life for daring to take on the might of the highway construction mafia in Bihar. Shanmugam, an IOC employee and IIM, Lucknow, alumnus, blew the whistle on Uttar Pradesh's petrol pump adulteration racket.

RTI activists have been hounded, beaten up and gunned down as was Amit Jethwa, shot dead right outside the Ahmedabad High Court two months ago after naming BJP's Junagadh MP, Dinu Solanki, during his exposé of criminal mining in the Gir forest preserve. A few months earlier, Vitthal Gite was butchered in Aurangabad for uncovering wrongdoing in a village school in Beed.

These horror stories are endless. They reveal two streams of consciousness in our nation – one wedded to honesty and freedom from fear, the other driven by greed and venality. Our great hope – and an inspiration for future generations – that we need not wring our hands in despair over the fate of this nation lies in the refusal of our whistleblowers to give up notwithstanding the dangers they face.

Not all whistleblowers wind up with a bullet hole in their heads or a knife across their throats. The majority of them – in the bureaucracy – are harassed, hounded, declared medically insane or pushed into do-nothing jobs and bureaucratic Gulags. No one hears about them as they vanish into the black hole. It is for this reason that *gfiles* has chosen to highlight, on our cover, the story of C Umashankar, an intrepid Scheduled Caste IAS officer who dared to take on Tamil Nadu's formidable political establishment.

His case will probably go down as a classic in the annals of Indian whistleblowing. Barring bullets and hatchets, there is little that the might of the state has not thrown at him. He remains unbowed, a beacon to others who refuse to tolerate fraud and injustice.

The whistleblower Bill is a powerful step in the right direction, but the nation needs to tackle fundamental reforms such as creating a Constitutional system of a true separation of powers in which the legislature no longer serves as a slavish extension of the executive and thereby assumes a more independent role of oversight through which it can better protect whistleblowers.

INDERJIT BADHWAR

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gfiles
How Praful Patel bankrupted India's flagship carriers to help favoured airlines and then asked the government for a Rs 50 billion bailout

Good report, but nothing'll happen

Reminds you of the "good old days" of young Badhwar in the US ("The daylight rape of the public interest", *gfiles*, August 2010). Well done. We are fast sliding (if not already "slid") into complete governmental anarchy and am sure *gfiles* will do something to correct the obvious tilts of the print/av world.
Arun Singh, *via email*
(Former Defence Minister and adviser to Rajiv Gandhi)

Have looked at the cover story and found it good, as to be expected from your pen!
Aftab Seth, *via email*
(Former spokesman, MEA; former High Commissioner to Pakistan)

Thanks. We need this sort of reporting.
Lalit Nirula, *via email*
(Former CEO and MD, Nirula's chain of restaurants)

The government should decide if we need a national carrier or not. It is time someone steps in and rescues it from downfall. It is better to function as two separate subsidiary companies under NACIL and scrap all flight acquisition plans and establish an optimum fleet level, get back slots of Heathrow and prohibit private carriers from operating international flights. Will this happen? No way. Who will benefit? Is it the country's first scam? No way. We will never learn lessons.
Sundararajan, *on blog*

We are not against the development but would definitely question the ill-conceived projects that are being executed in gross violation of all the laws with the blessings of Praful Patel and his team. Strangely, the PMO and Mrs Sonia Gandhi are silent.
Anil Sood, *on blog*

Congratulations on the powerful article. I presume it has reached editors of all newspapers and TV channels. Only a media blitz will see some action being taken.
Benedict, *on blog*

Why is the media not highlighting this issue? Instead of AI and IA people going on a strike for privatization why are the unions not highlighting these problems and letting the common man know about this? No wonder India is going for Boeing, and [Boeing India president] Dinesh Keskar is appreciated in the business media for propping up sales in India.
Vikram Vishwanath, *on blog*

Hope your petition succeeds and PP gets his just reward.
seadog4227, *on blog*

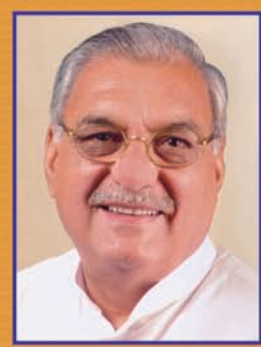
Air India was a battered brand even before Jet and Kingfisher arrived on the scene. It and its less glamorous sister, IC, were paragons of endless delays, ageing aircraft, rotten service, and internal corruption – essentially, all the hallmarks of a government monopoly that existed only for the rapaciousness of the babu-neta class, and the various unions who kept it in a stranglehold.

If anything, the Indian consumer is allowed far greater choice now, and has two carriers he can be proud of – Jet and Kingfisher. As for Air India, the presence of competition has forced it to improve its service standards, bring in new aircraft, and compete for the business of the Indian consumer. For AI to really take off, however, it needs to be rid of the GOI's tentacles. If it fails, so be it.
Jay, *on blog*

I wish you succeed, but nothing is going to happen to Praful Patel. He will disburse a few of those crores and the case will be lost due to poor evidence.
James, *on blog*

Grant Money Under Indira Gandhi Priyadarshini Vivah Shagun Yojna Increased More Than Two Times

- 'Shagun' grant money to families belonging to Scheduled Castes living below the poverty line for the marriage of their daughters and to widows belonging to all sections of society for their own re-marriage as well as for the marriage of their daughters increased from **Rs. 15,000 to Rs. 31,000**.
- 'Shagun' to other poor families living below the poverty line increased from **Rs. 5100 to Rs. 11,000**.
- **'Indira Bal Swasthya Yojna'** and **'Nehru Drishty Yojna'** are implemented in the State.



Bhupinder Singh Hooda
Chief Minister, Haryana

हरियाणा की महिलाओं का बढ़ाया सम्मान
कन्या भ्रूण हत्या रोकने का अनूठा निदान

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The persecution of a man who committed the truth

gfiles focusses on the indomitable spirit of an upright individual who rose from the ranks of the Scheduled Castes to become an officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre. A persistent exposer of wrongdoing since the start of his tenure in the early 1990s, C Umashankar has run afoul of the state's formidable DMK establishment and its bureaucrat apparatchiks. Not a single individual indicted by Umashankar in his various official probes has been brought to book; instead the book has been thrown at Umashankar who now faces not only vigilance inquiries and disqualification from promotion panels but also the charge that he faked his Scheduled Caste credentials.

Reproduced below is the unexpurgated version of Umashankar's appeal to the National Commission for Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes:

Before the National Commission for SC/ST, New Delhi

From

C.Umashankar IAS., (1990 batch)
No.33 Balakrishnan Road,
D1, Ashok Swasthi Apts., 3rd Floor,
Valmiki Nagar, Thiruvanmiyur,
Chennai 41. Tel: 044-42020423 Mob: 94443-00123

To

Chairman,
National Commission for Scheduled Castes
Lok Nayak Bhawan, Khan Market,
New Delhi - 110003
Fax: 91-11-24632298 Email: chairman-ncsc@nic.in

Complaint filed by C.Umashankar, IAS., against the State of Tamil Nadu

Umashankar: Hounded but unbowed

Umashankar's Exposés

- Misuse of funds for construction of cremation sheds for Scheduled Castes/Tribes
- South India Shipping Corporation shares scam (loss of Rs 200 crore)
- Granite quarry lease scam (loss of Rs 1000 crore)
- Fictitious allotment of houses and plots to Tamil Nadu Housing Board
- Purchase of 45,000 antennae and boosters without tenders
- Leasing of 20 acres of Coimbatore Medical College land to Star hotel
- Mysterious "disappearance" of government-owned ETL Infrastructure Ltd (worth more than Rs 700 crore)
- Actionable acts committed by the Sumangali TV Corporation (controlled by the Maran brothers)

I WAS selected for appointment as an IAS officer by the Union Public Service Commission against SC quota and allotted to the Tamil Nadu cadre during 1990. I joined the Service on 20th August 1990.

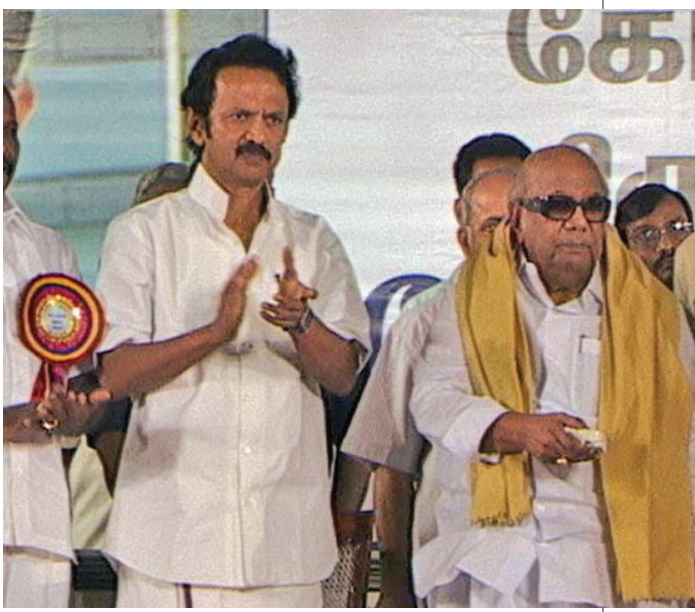
I state that during 1995 I was working as Additional Collector (Development) and Project officer, District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Madurai. There was misuse of funds allotted for construction of cremation sheds for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). I refused to obey the illegal order of the then District Collector, Madurai, Mr PR Sampath, IAS, to award the contract to a private contractor. A public interest litigation came to be filed in the Madras High Court. I filed an affidavit in the said writ petition narrating the true facts.

A Division Bench of Madras High Court, accepting the affidavit filed by me, ordered a CBI inquiry in WP No 15929/1995. The real accused in the scam are yet to be punished.

During 1996, the DMK was voted to power. The Government appointed me as Joint Vigilance Commissioner to peruse the files pertaining to high-level corruption. I submitted several reports, including 1) South India Shipping Corporation Share disinvestment scam (loss of Rs 200 crore); 2) Granite quarry lease scam (loss of about Rs 1000 crore); 3) Allotment of plots and houses of Tamil Nadu Housing Board to fictitious persons (loss not estimated); 4) Purchase of 45,000 TV antennas and boosters without following tender

PIB

Chandramouli: transferred from post



I told the Hon'ble Chief Minister that I would not be able to work under Dr Chandramouli, IAS, against whom I had submitted a report on the mysterious disappearance of ETL Infrastructure Limited.

procedure and without ascertaining the actual need; 5) Leasing of 20 acres of Coimbatore Medical College lands to Star hotel, club etc, in the name of women and child development at throwaway lease rent; 6) Fraudulent grant of *patta* for 7,106 acres forest land in Megamalai forest village, Madurai/Theni district to one family etc.

I indicted several senior IAS officers, including the ex-Chief Secretary, Mr N Narayanan, IAS, Thiru C Ramachandran, IAS, Dr S Narayan, IAS, Thiru Debandranath Sarangi, IAS, former Chief Minister, Ministers and others.

To my dismay I found that no worthwhile action was taken against highly influential officials who were deeply involved in the corruption. I therefore requested the government to relieve me from the post of Joint Vigilance Commissioner.

During February 1999 I was appointed District Collector, Tiruvarur. I introduced e-governance in the district administration. This was the first of its kind in the whole of India. Tiruvarur was rated 20 years ahead of the rest of India by a leading newspaper – *The Times of India*. The English weekly, *The Week*, in its millennium edition, chose me as the bureaucrat from all over India who can make the life of Indians better in the new millennium.

I submit that in the next general election, the DMK was defeated and the AIADMK came to power. I was sidelined and appointed Commissioner for Disciplinary Proceedings, an ex-cadre post.

The DMK was voted to power again in May 2006. I was appointed Managing Director of ELCOT, a state-owned company. I introduced total transparency in the matter of award of contracts by introducing e-tender and also by introduction of a new method of tender evaluation by the bidding contractors themselves. I also introduced the use of largescale free and open source software in government offices during this period.

WHILE I was working in ELCOT, twice I was called by Tmt Rajathi Ammal, wife of the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, to her office at Alwarpet. I should have refused to meet her. However, by way of courtesy I met her in her office. She attempted to influence me to award contract to her men in the matter of purchase of 45,000 fishermen's wireless sets. I told her that only through e-tender contracts are finalised and I should not be disturbed.

I state that ELCOT along with another private limited company by the name of New Era Technologies Limited, controlled by one Thiagaraja Chettiar, floated a joint venture company named ELNET Technologies Limited. The share of ELCOT in the new company is 26%. The share of New Era

PIB

PIB

Karunanidhi with Dayanidhi Maran (blue shirt); and Alagiri (above right): watch out when the clan unites

The Chief Minister is vindictive against me because I recommended penal action against the Maran brothers and made public the scam in ETL where the hands of Mr MK Alagiri, a Central Minister of the DMK party, is involved.

Technologies Limited is 24% and the remainder shares were subscribed by the public. This joint venture company, ELNET, floated a 100% subsidiary company named ETL Infrastructure Private Limited with intention of floating an Information Technology Park-cum-Special Economic Zone at Pallikaranai, Chennai. The company owns 26 acres of land which had been given IT Special Economic Zone status by the Government of India. The company built a 1.8 million square feet IT building in this IT Park-cum-SEZ. The total value of the asset is more than Rs 700 crore. The said company mysteriously disappeared from the control of ELNET and ELCOT obviously with the connivance of the former Chairman of ELCOT and political heavyweights. In my capacity as Managing Director, I was also the Chairman of ELNET. I wanted to probe the circumstances in which ELCOT and ELNET lost control of ETL Infrastructure Limited. I circulated a special resolution to be moved in the Annual General Body meeting of the shareholders of ELNET for removal of Unnamali Thiagarajan W/o Thiagaraja Chettiar from the office of Managing Director of ELNET. The Annual General Body meeting of the shareholders of ELNET was to be held on 30th July 2008.

I also sent special reports to the government regarding the scam, namely the mysterious disappearance of ETL Infrastructure Limited worth more than Rs 700 crore. I wanted a probe into the role of Mr Vivek Harinarayanan, IAS, and Dr C Chandramouli, IAS.

I state while I was physically verifying and searching the records pertaining to the mysterious disappearance of ETL Infrastructure Limited in ELNET's office on 28th July 2008, I received an order of transfer removing me from the post of MD, ELCOT, and posting me as Managing Director of Tamil Nadu Industrial Investment Corporation Limited (TIIC). I have reason to believe that it was a fraudulent transfer. The order of transfer was passed adverse to public interest and to help the said Thiagaraja Chettiar. It is perceived that Mr MK Alagiri, Union Minister, was responsible for my abrupt transfer from ELCOT.

While I was working in TIIC, there was a feud between the Maran brothers who own the Sun TV television network and the family of Dr Kalaignar Karunanidhi, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. The feud between the Maran brothers who have become very powerful and among the richest people in the country and MK Alagiri, the elder son of the Chief Minister, was well known. The burning of *Dinakaran* newspaper office at Madurai and hurling of petrol bombs and the death of three innocent persons in the murderous

attack is also well known.

I state that the Hon'ble Chief Minister called me and ordered me to accept assignment as Managing Director of Arasu Cable TV Corporation Limited. I told the Hon'ble Chief Minister that I would not be able to work under Dr Chandramouli, IAS, against whom I had submitted a report on the mysterious disappearance of ETL Infrastructure limited and also pledging of ELCOT's joint venture company – ELNET – to secure Rs 81-crore loan for the mysteriously disappeared company, namely ETL Infrastructure Limited. Dr Chandramouli, IAS, was transferred from the post of Information Technology Secretary-cum-Chairman of Arasu Cable TV Corporation Limited and in his place Mr PWC Davidar, IAS, was appointed. My appointment as MD, Arasu Cable TV Corporation, was notified simultaneously on 30th October 2008.

I assumed office as MD, Arasu Cable TV Corporation Limited, a government-owned company, on 3rd November 2008. I found that Sumangali Cable TV, controlled by the Maran brothers, was indulging in largescale destruction of optic fibre cable infrastructure of Arasu Cable TV Corporation. Sumangali Cable Vision was determined to ensure that their monopoly was maintained by all means. I brought to the notice of the government the criminal acts committed by Sumangali Cable Vision Limited and the involvement of Pongalur Palanichamy, a Minister in the State Cabinet in helping Sumangali Cable TV who destroyed the property of the government company. I sent several reports including proposals for arrest of the Maran brothers under the preventive detention laws and action under the penal laws.

I state that there was a settlement of the dispute between the Maran brothers and the family of Dr Kalignar Karunanidhi. As an officer of the All-India Service I pursued my job in right earnest and wanted the Maran brothers to be punished and Sumangali Cable TV to be nationalized.

I state that I was shunted out of Arasu Cable TV Corporation and posted as Commissioner of Small Savings, an ex-cadre post. The Arasu Cable TV Corporation Limited is now almost dead.

I state that the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the Maran brothers became vengeful against me and wanted to disturb me.

While working in TIIC I sent an intimation to the State government under Rule 4 (2)(b) of the All-India Service (Conduct) Rules, 1968, stating that my wife, Suryakala, MCom, BL, was employed in Tessolve Inc, Chennai branch, as HR Executive. She was working in that company from 1-4-2008 to 31-12-2008. Her gross salary was Rs 25,000 per month.

I state that the State government which was determined to throttle me at the behest of the Maran brothers issued a

charge memo apropos my wife joining service in Tessolve Inc. The charge memo was issued to prevent empanelment of my name in the cadre of Joint Secretary to the Government of India. Because of this, I have been denied Joint Secretary empanelment during this year. I have been denied even a car loan and allotment of a housing plot by the government of Tamil Nadu.

I filed OA No 79 of 2010 on the file of the Central Administrative Tribunal, Chennai, and obtained a stay against the charge memo on 16th January 2010.

I received a communication from the Chief Secretary to the government regarding my moveable and immoveable assets. I sent a reply dated 28-10-2009.

On 6-5-2010 a Deputy Superintendent of Police called me over phone and sought an appointment for conducting inquiries regarding my alleged assets disproportionate to my known sources of income. When I asked him under what authority he was asking me to answer his queries, he said he was so authorized by the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption. This led to my filing WP No 12274 of 2010 on the file of the High Court. The Hon'ble High Court was pleased to admit the writ petition and grant a stay.

I also filed WP No 15946 of 2010 questioning the Manual of Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption under which the officers of the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption, namely police officers, conduct inquiries against All-India Service officers dehors the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure. It is my case that the State government is free to

The said company (ETL) mysteriously disappeared from the control of ELNET and ELCOT obviously with the connivance of the former Chairman of ELCOT and political heavyweights.

institute any disciplinary proceedings against me in accordance with the provisions of the All India Service Act, Public Servants Inquiries Act, the Prevention of Corruption Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure and the State government is not competent to conduct any inquiry against me without registering a case against me by the due process of law. The writ petition is pending adjudication.

I state that the government of Tamil Nadu has passed GO Ms No 670, Public (Special A) department, dated 21-7-2010, suspending me from the service pending inquiry to scrutinize the genuineness of the Scheduled Caste community certificate produced by me.

I state that the government has also issued a press note on 23-7-2010 intimating to the press the cause of my suspension. I state that the law relating to caste certificates is settled. It is only the Committee which can go into the question of caste certificate.

I submitted the community certificate to the Union Public Service Commission. When the results of the All India Services examination was published by the UPSC, my name was withheld and placed in the provisional category pending verification of the community certificate. The certificate was duly verified and thereafter the result was published.

I submit that the government has not taken any action against the corrupt bureaucrats. The State government is targeting me because I have been honest and sincere.

The State government has caused a publication in *The New Indian Express* dated 25-7-2010 titled "Umashankar did produce false community certificate", stating that I have produced a false certificate. The newspaper report is engineered by the State government, the Maran brothers and the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption of Tamil Nadu.

In WP No 15946 of 2010 I have alleged that one Mr Ram Mohan Rao, IAS, was found in possession of assets disproportionate to his known sources of income. The amount is said to be about Rs 81 crore. The government is protecting him. The government is protecting all corrupt officials and making use of them. The government does not want officers like me to serve the public.

I state that I am not claiming any special right. I can be chargesheeted under the All-India Services Act, Public Servants Inquiries Act , the Prevention of Corruption Act or under the penal laws if the government has credible information and materials against me. The government, through the Directorate of Vigilance and Anti-Corruption, has started a smear campaign against me by planting false stories as if I have produced a false certificate. I have come to know that the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu is insisting that an FIR be filed against me. The State government, headed by the present Chief Minister, is intolerant and vindictive against me because I recommended penal action against the Maran brothers and made public the scam in ETL Infrastructure where the hands of Mr MK Alagiri, a Central Minister of the DMK party, is involved. Thus the State power is being misused against me.

I therefore request the Commission to protect me from illegal harassment by the Tamil Nadu government, the Chief Minister's family and the powerful Maran brothers who are close to the Chief Minister.

Please ensure that inquiry, if any, regarding my caste certificate is conducted by the Central Vigilance Commission or CBI or any other Central agency not under the control of the State government.

Appropriate action may be initiated to allow me to work under the Central government or any agency of the Central government not under the control of the government of Tamil Nadu.

I also request you to ensure proper security for me and my family through Central security forces. g

Dated the 26th July 2010 at Chennai.

Pranab treads warily

minister eyes top post

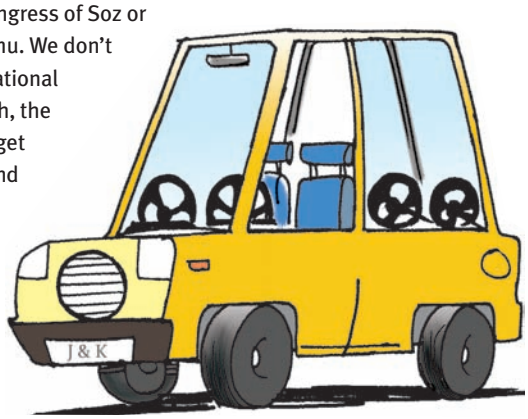
PRANAB Mukherjee is displaying extreme caution. It seems he does not want to give any leverage to anybody that might jeopardize his final chance to make it to prime ministership. So he is, more or less, following in the footsteps of Manmohan Singh. No hush-hush dealings can take place in the Finance Ministry now. And Pranab*babu* has cautioned his son, who works in a major industrial house, and daughter not to give wheeler-dealers the time of day. Both are dutifully following papa's advice.

But it so happens that the nation's Finance Minister is required, willy-nilly, to play many roles. This has led to a certain official in the Ministry becoming all-powerful. The officer, from a family of bureaucrats, counts experience among his attributes and knows precisely what the boss desires. And so one can guess the dignitaries who visit Pranab*babu*'s Talkatora Road residence in the fanciest of cars from early in the morning till late in the night for the Minister keeps a long working day.

Divided Kashmir

bhim puts it in a nutshell

THE government is terribly worried about Kashmir. The State might be ruled de jure by Omar Abdullah and father Farooq, but the Valley is ruled de facto by Pakistani PM Yousuf Raza Gilani's agitation calendar. At the meeting called by Manmohan Singh, attended by leaders of various political parties such as Ghulam Nabi Azad, Saifuddin Soz and Panther Party chief Bhim Singh, besides the Abdullahs, the atmosphere was grim. The PM asked the Opposition parties to cooperate with the Chief Minister and State administration. Bhim Singh's rejoinder was, "The Opposition parties don't know with whom to cooperate, the Congress of Ghulam Nabi Azad or the Congress of Soz or the Congress faction in Jammu. We don't know which faction of the National Conference to cooperate with, the party's senior leaders don't get along with Omar Abdullah and Farooq Abullah. Even Omar and Farooq don't get along with each other. The State administration is also divided into factions." After he finished, pin-drop silence followed. Understandable.

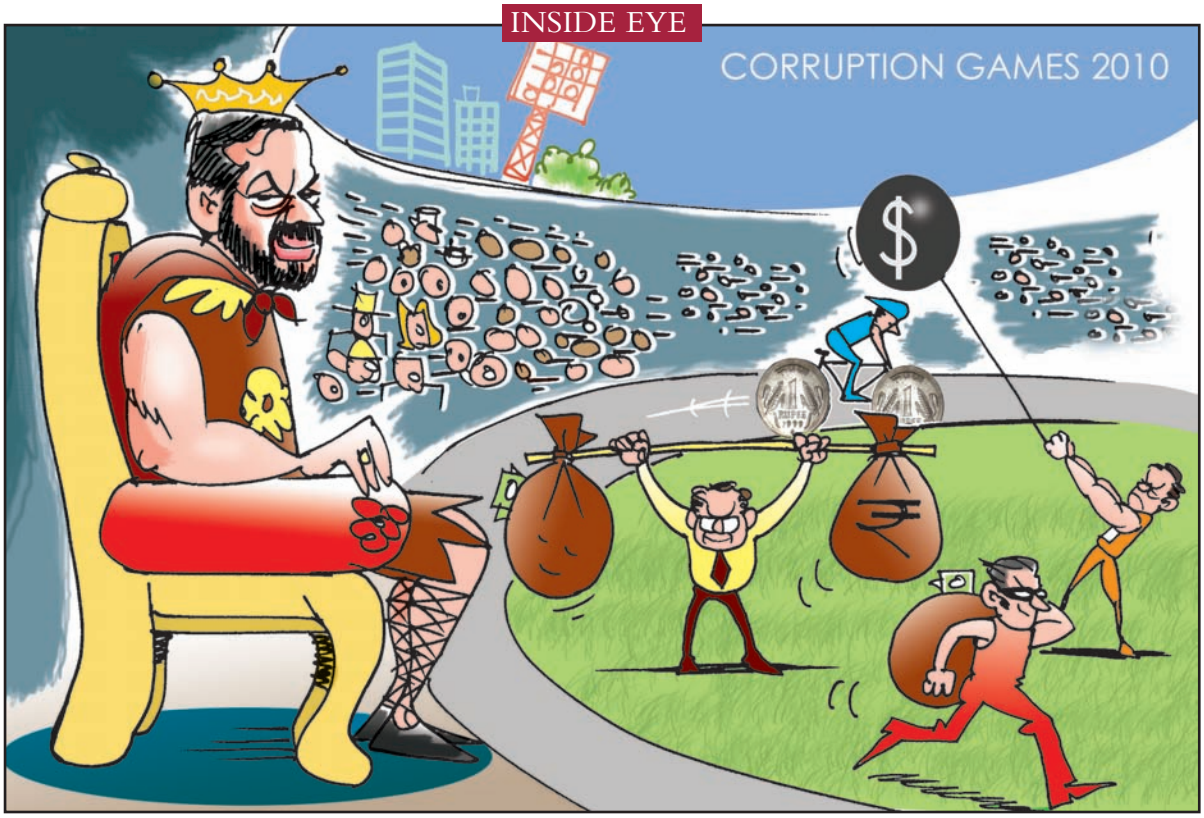


Mining mafia on a roll

manipulates governor's advisers

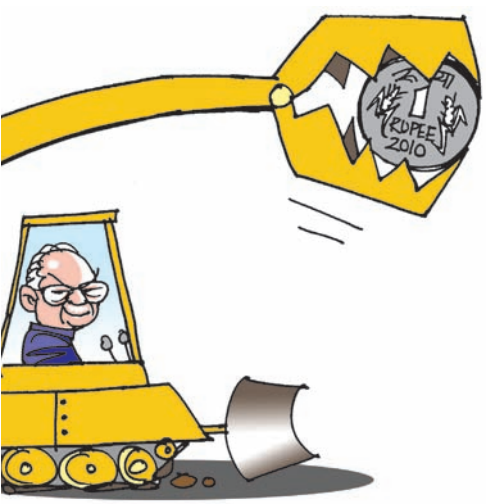
MOH Farook was a fiery student leader from Pondicherry who became Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and was then politically unemployed for a long while. Then, at the age of 73, he became Governor of Jharkhand and landed in the Raj Bhawan at Ranchi, to the relief of the populace who were fed up with the Madhu Kodas and Shibu Sorens. But Farook, who knows the period of President's Rule will be over soon, turned out to be as susceptible to the mining mafia as Koda who made millions in two years. And so the administration, which expected matters to improve after the induction of a new Governor, was disappointed.

The mining mafia knows how



ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

to get its work done and has penetrated the palace. It is so powerful that it has got its favourites appointed as advisers to the Governor. And the coal mines are continuing to be gold mines.



Governor Bhardwaj shows the way

bid to oust reddy brothers

WHILE on Governors, the post of Karnataka Governor was rather low-profile as long as Rameshwar Thakur held it. He did carry out some "odd jobs", but quietly. But his successor, Hansraj Bhardwaj, is quite the opposite. Bhardwaj's father was a Personal Security officer for Nehru at Teen Murti Bhawan. And the son became a member of Indira Gandhi's "monkey brigade".

Bhardwaj is aware that Chief Minister BS Yeddyurappa is popular with the masses but is dependent on the Reddy brothers of Bellary fame. The latter, along with Leader of the Opposition Sushma Swaraj, have "mutual interests" in Karnataka. Now, wherever Bhardwaj goes, he trumpets a call for removal of the Reddy brothers from the State Cabinet. He even met President Pratibha Patil on the issue. With some other top BJP leaders also having high stakes in Karnataka, Bhardwaj deserves credit for carrying out the Constitutional obligations of a Governor. g

How is the steel frame holding up?

India's maiden Civil Services Survey has opened up a new avenue for administrative reforms, with the Centre attempting to put its finger on the pulse of members of three All-India Services and seven Central services

by **Naresh Minocha**

THE feedback is certainly pulsating: As many as 85 per cent of respondents take pride in being civil servants; 81 per cent believe that political corruption takes place because there are always some civil servants willing to collaborate in it. "A majority of respondents felt that corrupt officers get away without being punished," says the Civil Services Survey (CSS), confirming public perception at large.

Apart from the IAS, the IPS and the Indian Forest Service (IFoS) are All-India Services. The Central services included in CSS are: Indian Audit & Accounts Service (IA&AS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS), Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax) or IRS (IT), Indian Revenue Service (Customs & Central Excise) or IRS (C&CE), Indian Railway Personnel Service (IRPS), Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS) and Indian Postal Service (IPoS).

Commissioned by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), CSS was carried out by Hyderabad-based Centre for Good Governance and AC Nielsen ORG-MARG. The latter also prepared the report, released by DARPG in April.

CSS is credible because it forthrightly mentions glitches encountered in eliciting responses in the survey of 18,432 officials. It also identifies the potential risk of errors as well as limitations of responses to specific questions. Moreover, it has boldly dealt with the subject of corruption and the politician-bureaucrat nexus. Additional credibility stems from the freedom given to respondents in this voluntary survey to speak their minds fearlessly on all these and related administrative issues in 300 words. The diverse entries in this "comment box" of the questionnaire are an eye-opener for reformers and the public.

CSS constitutes a bottom-up approach in understanding the requirements for reforms. It ratifies as well as enriches several recommendations and observations made by administrative reforms committees that constitute a top-down approach to reforms.

The bottom-up approach would acquire more depth and yield better insight into administrative challenges as and when such surveys extend to all government employees – as is the practice in the US and Canada. Such a survey of 64 lakh Central and State government employees, if ever attempted, would be a huge challenge in itself.

CSS differs in concept and methodology from the Census of Central Government Employees (CCGE) that is periodically undertaken by the Ministry of Labour and Employment. The last such Census, the 31st in its series, covered 31.16 lakh regular employees and was released in October 2009.

CSS is a questionnaire-based study in which each employee is requested to respond, whereas CCGE is based on data submitted by 7,352 employing agencies in the standardized format. CCGE also incorporates secondary data collected from various government entities. It is thus more of a statistical exercise that does not collect information directly from the staff.

Of the 18,432 officials who were sent the questionnaire by post and e-mail, only 4,808 or 26 per cent responded. This in itself is a finding, reflecting the indifference and propensity to avoid risk. CSS, however, contended that a response rate of 26 per cent is, statistically, a "significantly large proportion" of the "universe" of civil servants. The propensity to avoid risk or the fear of tak-

It has boldly dealt with the subject of corruption and the politician-bureaucrat nexus. Additional credibility stems from the freedom given to respondents.

IAS entrants in Mussoorie: satisfaction with reservations

ing a decision that can prove wrong is further confirmed by the finding that only 2,300 out of the 4,808 respondents availed of the "comment box".

Only 12.47 per cent of the 18,432 officials, the brain of the Indian bureaucracy, had the courage to speak their minds even when fully assured of confidentiality!

THE point is, if officials exhibit such aversion to taking risks even in answering a questionnaire they will certainly shy away from taking innovative, bold and fast decisions independently in their work. CSS, however, observes that the output and efficiency of an organization depends on the fact that officers should feel confident about speaking their minds or challenging the way things are done in the interest of better results. It said: "In this regard, 65 per cent respondents feel confident speaking their mind or challenging the way things are done without fear."

This was one of the factors covered under the work environment dimension. A work environment conducive to efficient working requires components such as competent staff, adequate financial and physical resources, simplified procedures and absence of outside pressures. It is critical to determine overall efficiency of the organization and the satisfaction of an officer.

The issue of maintenance of office discipline was also raised, and 45 per cent of the respondents felt that existing administrative policies and procedures are not helpful in dealing with indiscipline in the office. CSS notes that discipline in office is an essential requirements for a favourable working environment. Senior management in office needs to be fully equipped to discipline the staff. Procedures for tackling indiscipline should be quick and effective.

As regards undue outside interference, only 29 per cent feel that there is pressure owing to it. Responses reveal that undue outside pressure is a significant problem only in the case of the three All-India Services (42-48 per cent agree). The response regarding the issue and what it entailed for junior officers was analysed on the basis of seniority. Senior officers reported outside pressure more often than juniors.

Dealing with the "job satisfaction and motivation" dimension, the report explained that the respondents were asked three questions. They were required to rate (on importance) the given six factors first and then to state whether they were satisfied with their current assignment. The six factors were: recognition of effort, chance for useful contribution, opportunities to use and develop skills, congenial work environment, challenging opportunities at work and right level of authority in job.

In case of dissatisfaction, the respondents were further requested to indicate reasons (which referred to the same set of six factors). All six factors were seen as very important by over 60 per cent. However, chance to make a useful contribution (73 per cent) and autonomy in the job (71 per cent) were ranked higher than the other four factors.

About 73 per cent reported that they were satisfied in their current assignment, as compared to 22 per cent who expressed dissatisfaction while 6 per cent were unsure. The service-wise

The propensity to avoid risk or the fear of taking a decision that can prove wrong is confirmed by the finding that only 50% availed of the 'comment box'.

analysis of the responses indicates that, except for IRPS where satisfaction level is relatively lower (60 per cent), the rest of the services score high. Of the officers who expressed, mid-career bureaucrats form the largest set – 25 per cent are in the 40-49 years age group. This matches with the findings analysed on the basis of number of years in service ie among those reporting dissatisfaction, officers who have completed 17-25 years of service form the largest group (25 per cent). The respondents mainly pointed to lack of opportunity to contribute constructively (47 per cent) and inadequate authority and autonomy (46 per cent) as the reasons for dissatisfaction. Further analysis shows lack of appropriate autonomy is a bigger issue at the junior level.

Coming to postings and transfers or tenure policy, 52 per cent believed that postings to important posts and sought-after stations are not decided on merit while 58 per cent felt that transfer orders are not issued keeping in mind the specific needs of those concerned. However, 64 per cent were satisfied with their postings as well as tenures.

Service-wise analysis indicates that officers of Central services such as Indian Postal Service, IA&AS and IFS are among those most satisfied with respect to overall postings and transfers. Satisfaction with tenures is the lowest in IAS and IPS, whereas satisfaction with stations of posting is lowest in the case of Indian Forest Service and IRS (IT). In the case of officers dissatisfied with their current station of posting, the most important reasons for dissatisfaction are related to: lack of good educational facilities (49 per cent), inability to take care of aged parents (48 per cent) and lack of healthcare facilities to cater to emergencies (42 per cent).

Regarding work-life balance, 45 per cent believed they had control over their time to a great extent while 50 per cent felt they had control to some extent. A gender-wise analysis indicates that women officers feel less in control of their time (40 per cent) than their male counterparts (45 per cent). Junior officers felt they have little say in deciding how to plan the use of their time. However, officers at the highest level also experience some constraint in managing their time.

SERVICE-WISE analysis shows that extent of lack of control over time has been reported more by the IAS, IPS, IRS (C&CE), IFoS, and the like, which are characterized by field duty, extensive public interface and so on, vis-à-vis the Central Services such as Postal Service, IRPS where the nature of work is typically desk-based.

Affecting time management are lack of adequate support staff in terms of numbers and competence (74 per cent), heavy workload (57 per cent) and too many meetings (52 per cent).

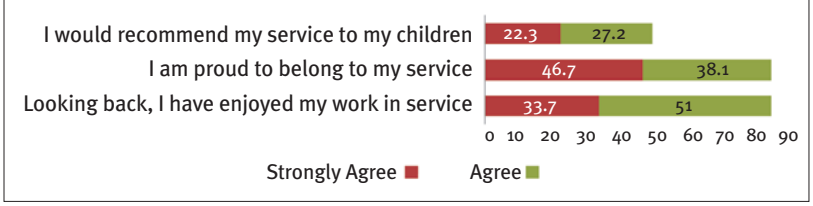
CSS observes that the existing system of performance management operates almost completely through the Annual Confidential Report (ACR) that judges officers' performance every year in the areas of work, conduct, character and capabilities. Recently, the government has introduced a Modified Performance Appraisal System for AIS and Central services, which promises greater transparency, interactive appraisal and job-specific appraisal formats.

Fortythree per cent agreed that the performance appraisal system is fair, objective and transparent while 35 per cent did not. On whether meritorious officers are valued, recognized and rewarded, 37 per cent did not agree while 35 per cent did. More officers agreed that merit is recognized in IA&AS (53 per cent) and IRTS (52 per cent), but the feeling of lack of recognition was particularly common among the officers of IRS (IT), 48.3 per cent, and IPoS (44 per cent) and IRPS (42 per cent).

About 64 per cent felt the appraising officer had adequate understanding of their work and performance while 16 per cent disagreed. As many as 73 per cent said short-term goals were given

52 per cent believed that postings to important posts and sought-after stations are not decided on merit.

OVERALL PERCEPTION ABOUT CIVIL SERVICES



PIB

Police recruits with President Patil: not so upbeat

The most positive assessment of ethical standards is by IA&AS officers while that of IPS officers is least positive.

greater weight in the appraisal as compared to long-term objectives of institution-building. The percentage who shared this perception was found to be particularly high in IRPS (82 per cent), IPS (79 per cent) and IRTS (78 per cent). It was also shared to a lesser extent by officers of IA&AS (61 per cent) and IFS (62 per cent).

Factors that can negatively impact performance can be broadly grouped into three categories – people, infrastructure and processes. The most common impediments to performance are: poor-quality staff (43 per cent), inadequate support staff (35 per cent) and outdated procedures (32 per cent). In comparison, attitudinal problems are less common (20 per cent). Lack of skilled staff is perceived to be a widespread problem.

The respondents were asked to indicate whether promotions in their service took place at expected intervals. Overall, 54 per cent answered in the affirmative while 36 per cent responded negatively. Among the various services, satisfaction over timely promotions was highest in the IA&AS (85 per cent) followed by IAS (81 per cent) and IFS (72 per cent) whereas officers from IFoS (26 per cent), IRS (C&CE), 27 per cent, and IRS (IT), 43 per cent, were least satisfied.

This perception is largely borne out by the threshold analysis for promotions in seven Central services. Promotions in IA&AS, IAS and IFS are indeed faster as more junior batches among them have been promoted to various levels.

Sixtysix per cent agree that the performance appraisal system has been ineffective in keeping incompetent officers from reaching the top. Across the services, less than 16 per cent agree that the appraisal system has been effective; only in the case of IA&AS, the percentage exceeds 30 per cent.

On fast-track promotions for high achievers being the norm, 70 per cent agreed provided adequate measures are in place for fair assessment.

Fair representation of services under the Central Staffing Scheme is a concern for civil servants across the services. The findings indicate that there is a remarkable difference of opinion between the IAS and other services. Seventyone per cent of IAS officers were satisfied with the representation of their service vis-à-vis the seven services in which level of satisfaction was less than 22 per cent. The perception of non-IAS services is borne out by the secondary data which shows that the IAS has a clear domination of the Central staffing scheme posts. It occupies 69 of the 89 Secretary-level posts (78 per cent) and 44 out of 68 Secretary equivalent-level posts (65 per cent). At the Additional Secretary and Joint Secretary levels as well, the IAS has a clear supremacy with 94 per cent and 75 per cent of the total posts. Other services get some representation only at Director-level or below.

While over 42 per cent felt that a majority of officers upholds ethics, rules and the like in spite of personal risk, 23 per cent felt that such officers were rare. As many as 70 per cent agreed that a majority of officers does not approach influential people or use other means to get good postings and so on.

The most positive assessment of ethical standards in their service is by IA&AS officers while the assessment by IPS officers is least positive.

IAS and IPS officers perceive the prevalence of unethical practices in their respective services the most. The IA&AS, IFS and IRS (C&CE) perceive officers belonging to their service/cadre as relatively more ethical.

There is agreement (81 per cent) across services that political corruption takes place because there are some civil servants willing to collaborate in it. A majority of respondents felt that corrupt officers get away without being punished. It was also felt that corrupt officers are able to get the most sought-after postings. Harassment of honest officials through baseless complaints and investigations also turns out to be a major issue (58 per cent) in several services. g

How the world views them,

In dismantling archaic percepts and constructs lies th

by **MG Devasahayam**

TWO surveys on the civil services have come out in quick succession. One is an online survey, with 340 responses, that gauged public perceptions of the Indian administrative system. It was conducted by professors from the University of Bahrain and the Institute of Management Technology, Dubai. The salient outcome of this survey was that over 90 per cent of the respondents felt that political pressure is the major constraint of the civil service system. An overwhelming 93.5 per cent feel that "the tendency is to serve their political masters more than the public", which means they are more politicians' servants and less public servants! These numbers may not be sacrosanct, but the perception is real. In the public domain, where the civil services are, "truth is not the truth, perception is the truth"!

The other is the Civil Services Survey, conducted by the Government of India, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, to understand civil servants' perceptions of themselves and their service. The survey covered 18,432 officers belonging to 10 select services (All-India and Central) both online and by post and had 4,808 (26 per cent) respondents. The survey is comprehensive and covers several dimensions of the civil services except the most important one – the issue of politicization of the civil services, acknowledged as the main reason for its decline and decay! This shows an ostrich-like delusion among the higher echelons of the government.

Nevertheless, 430 (9 per cent) of the respondents on their own cited this as the major source of corruption and inefficiency in the services and felt that political domination and interference affect officers' contribution, motivation and initiative. They also expressed concern over the weakening of internal discipline in the services owing to the apparent powerlessness of senior officers to take punitive measures against subordinates backed by political leaders. An alarming trend of manipulating the departmental disciplinary system and criminal justice system through political influence to reinstate officers who had been suspended or dismissed was also recorded.

An interesting irony is that while only 13 per cent in the "public perception" survey expressed satisfaction with the service rendered by civil servants, in the "in-house" survey 73 per cent of civil service incumbents (IAS: 75.1 per cent) expressed satisfaction with their own service and the job!

The perception in both surveys that the civil services have succumbed to political pressure and domination is worrisome. At the time of framing, the Constitution, the founding fathers apprehended an era of "convulsive politics" and "self-seeking politicians" ruling the country in the years following Independence. As a counter-balance, the higher civil services were expected to "give a fair and just administration to the country and manage it on an even keel". To ensure this and to safeguard them from the "vicissitudes of political convulsions", the IAS and IPS were given Constitutional protection.

PIB

Manmohan Singh with IAS probationers: reform blueprint needed

Politicization of the civil services is acknowledged as the reason for its decay, but there's an ostrich-like delusion among the higher echelons of government.

, how they view themselves

s the challenge and opportunity for IAS reformers

In fact, the Constituent Assembly resolved to establish the All-India Services for "attracting to the highest services the best material available in the country transgressing political boundaries". If the public perception is to be believed, these "highest services" are now sub-serving the lowest political interests rather than performing the public service for which they were recruited and covenanted.

Six decades after Independence, precisely the opposite of what the founding fathers envisaged seems to have happened, clearly indicating an administrative collapse that needs to be squarely faced. Such collapse is already manifesting itself in the tribal belt of Dandakaranya. It is unfair to expect the nation and its people to bestow huge pay, perks and prestige on its "best human material" for functioning merely as "politicians' servants".

Two faces of IAS

Coming specifically to the IAS, one of the findings of the "public perception" survey is that "over-insured job security has made majority of them indolent and supremely arrogant". This is too general and sweeping. Nevertheless, despite modern upbringing and liberal education, several IAS officials do suffer attitudinal and functional deficiencies. This is mainly because of the colonial system they have inherited which was marked by superciliousness, rigid hierarchy and servility to distant masters. Even after decades, democratic and free India has not reconfigured its civil services and the old culture of servitude, indolence and arrogance persists among many.

THE crisis in the IAS started in the late 1950s when development replaced land revenue generation as the major goal of administration, with development posts enjoying high prestige. At that time India's civil service system was widely seen as one of its assets. But the hierarchical layering of the system and IAS officials' lack of in-depth knowledge in various fields turned out to be major constraints in development administration. Jobs in the whole range of new industrial and commercial activities the state was expanding into were also highly specialized and equally demanding of expertise. Though not qualified, IAS officials got themselves positioned in these posts. With the new jobs seducing upwardly mobile IAS officials, basic governance got neglected.

Globalization and economic reforms in the 1990s brought in further change in the IAS. The FDI-GDP model of development became such a mania that a former Chief Secretary of "progressive" Tamil Nadu openly exhorted: "Investors are coming to the state with lots of money. Our main job is to receive and facilitate them." In the event, "facilitating" the *amir aadmi* arriving with millions and billions has become a higher priority for an IAS official in the reform era than basic governance and serving the *aam aadmi* living hand to mouth. These conflicting agendas have led to the IAS acquiring a split face. As a result, an administrative instrument conceived, designed and structured as a permanent civil service has virtually descended into being a "spoils system" absorbing the negative aspects of both.

The Reform Agenda

The IAS has two options – to continue as a permanent civil service or become a spoils system as in the US. By mixing up these two conflicting systems, governance in the country is getting severely skewed. If the choice is the former, as would in all probability be, the service must go through fundamental and holistic reforms to transform itself into a vibrant, transparent management

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SHARAD SAXENA

Foreign Secretary Rao at Civil Services Day: do smiles hide concerns?

Six decades after Independence, the opposite of what the founding fathers envisaged seems to have happened, indicating an administrative collapse.

cadre so that the unimaginative, acquiescing and egocentric civil servant can become an imaginative, unacquiescing and result-oriented manager. This cannot be achieved by bulky, repetitive ARC Reports or endless sermonizing. To make this happen, IAS reformers should become iconoclastic, take the bull by the horn and demolish pet theories, myths and mindsets that have crippled the dynamism of the service.

First is the "bureaucratic gagging", as epitomized in "a civil servant should be seen, not heard". Under this anachronistic arrangement, some of India's best minds that constitute the IAS are being throttled and wasted as mere status quo time-servers. What is worse, by remaining silent and unable to speak up against corruption and misrule, the conscientious among the IAS officers are fast losing their principles and personality. This is unacceptable, particularly in the face of mounting corruption and venality in governance that is destroying the fibre of our democratic polity.

The notion of "subservience to political masters" envisages a meek role for IAS officials and is therefore self-defeating. The IAS has a Constitutional role to play in giving honest, fair and just governance to the people, particularly those the ruling politicians do not represent. In our skewed electoral system of first-past-the-post and the reality of low voter turnout, ruling politicians hardly represent 25-30 per cent of the people. If the IAS officials strictly observe "political subservience" and surrender to the rulers-of-the-day who represent only about a quarter of the population and do their biddings without demur, where will the majority flee?

Too much protection can reduce a person to cowardice. This is what is happening to IAS officials – they willingly become cowards since they do not have the courage even to face a transfer or some minor inconvenience for upholding principles of good governance. Like a coward who dies a thousand deaths they are compromising and acquiescing every time just to keep their posts and positions safe. This is rank hypocrisy born out of an extreme phobia of losing security and protection, and must change.

The practice of Jack-of-all-trades, fitting round pegs in square holes and square pegs in round holes, is the villain of professionalism and probity in the civil service. By perpetrating non-professionalism and non-performance in governance, this feudal practice enables politicians to play favourites and gives them unbridled power to post anybody for any job, the main criteria being their pliability and "surrenderability"!

In dismantling these archaic hangovers lies the challenge and opportunity for the IAS reformers.

Who should be the reformers?

Such fundamental reforms are for institutions like the Union Public Service Commission and the National Academy of Administration (NAA) that have the requisite synergy, inclination and expertise.

The UPSC was established under Article 315 of the Constitution of India "to undertake recruitment functions as well as duties of a quasi-judicial character in connection with the discipline, control and protection of the services". To train IAS officers, the NAA was set up. This institution represents an interesting confluence of academic rigour and intellectual freedom. There is a strong rationale for assigning the role of reforming the civil services to the UPSC and NAA.

It is time these institutions assume a leadership position, declare an administrative crisis, rally the legislature and executive, and come out with a comprehensive reform blueprint so that civil servants can give "fair and just administration to the country", which is sadly lacking today. g

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The Augean Stables

Now is the time for Manmohan Singh to radically transform the civil services and prove his critics wrong

by **Rahul Singh**

SINCE becoming an adult, I have interacted extensively with civil servants. In the milieu that I grew up in, they were considered the elite of the country. Two of my parents' closest friends were distinguished civil servants, Prem Kirpal and EN Mangatrai. The first became Education Secretary, even though he had not qualified through the competitive civil services exam. And the second served as Chief Secretary in Punjab and Kashmir.

In fact, when I was still in college, I went on a trek in the Lahaul valley with Mangatrai and his wife, Champa. Along with us were some young IAS officers, including SS Grewal, Sarla Grewal (the two were not married then, they fell in love during the trek), Kapila (whose first name I forget) and Thakur Das. All four went on to become outstanding civil servants.

Bright, hard-working and idealistic – those were the qualities I associated with the civil service. Many of my collegemates joined it and even I made a halfhearted attempt to get in (I did poorly in the interview).

In the early 1980s, when terrorism in Punjab was at its peak, I moved from Mumbai (then Bombay) to Chandigarh as editor of *The Indian Express*. Chandigarh was a Union Territory and also the capital of both Punjab and Haryana. So it had civil servants from three cadres, probably more civil servants per capita than any other city in the country (or perhaps the world)! I got to know many of them.

PH Vaishnav, a Gujarati who spoke fluent Punjabi, was the most endearing. He became Chief Secretary of Punjab and it was under his administration – Surjit Singh Barnala was Chief Minister and "supercop" Julio Ribeiro, who had been "imported" from Bombay, the head of police – that the terrorists were put on the backfoot. NN Vohra (now Governor of Kashmir) was the Punjab Home Secretary and Prem Kathpalia the Financial Commissioner. Manohar Singh Gill (now Union Sports Minister) was also a Secretary.

Lower down, there were Ajit Kumar, Anil and Rajni Razdan, Amitabh Pande, Rajan Kashyap, Krishnamurthi, Sunil Ahuja, Kamal Nain Singh, Rupan Deol Bajaj (famous for her battle with another "supercop" over bottom-pinching). They all became good friends of mine and most of them went on to occupy senior positions at the Centre.

They all had one characteristic in common: complete integrity. There was not a hint of graft or nepotism surrounding any of them, though civil service salaries were ridiculously low. However, corruption had begun to creep in. I heard of wily IAS officers who knew that land was going to be developed and infrastructure put in place. As a result, the value of that land was bound to go up steeply. They would buy plots, often in the names of their wives or close relatives. This was just one of the many ways in which civil servants were enriching themselves.

There's a proposal from Narayana Murthy, founder of Infosys, both simple and radical: abolish the IAS and replace it with a professional service.

When Bhajan Lal was Haryana Chief Minister, one of his most senior bureaucrats, who had already acquired a dubious reputation, held his daughter's wedding in grand style. He invited hundreds of the State's leading industrialists and businessmen. For days, Chandigarh was abuzz with talk of the lavish presents and envelopes that had been handed over as wedding gifts.

Since those days of the 1980s, there has been a precipitate decline in moral standards in the civil services. This is not just my observation, it is a general feeling among the informed public. Here is a sampling of what I have read in recent days in the newspapers:

Headlined "Babus admit to corruption in the ranks", an item in *The Times of India* said that a "perception" survey showed 80 per cent of IAS, IFS, IPS, IRS, and six other top Central services officers agreed that "corruption takes place because there are always some civil

(Left to right) Ribeiro, Gill and Vohra: complete integrity

servants willing to collaborate in it". They also said that corrupt officers got away without being punished, adding that successful candidates in the UPSC exams, even after qualifying for a place in the IAS and IFS, often opted for the revenue services like Customs and Income Tax for obvious reasons.

Writing in *The Indian Express*, Ribeiro said, "Corruption has permeated every aspect of public life.... Most police officers do not care to follow the rules because they know they will get away with the help of their political patrons." He was commenting on a report of how senior IPS officers were setting up their wives and sons in the private security business. "This is a reflection of the rot that has set into the police force in Maharashtra in the last two decades," he added. But it is not just Maharashtra where it has happened.

In *The Tribune*, Shailaja Chandra, a former Secretary at the Centre who was also Chief Secretary of Delhi, has this to say: "There was a time when joining the civil services was a matter of prestige. Increasingly now the public looks upon the entire gamut of civil services as self-seeking, greedy and corrupt." She calls for a "Corruption Eradication Commission" like the one set up in Indonesia which prosecuted and jailed more than 100 high-ranking officials over five years. Those jailed included a Minister, Members of Parliament, heads and key officials of the Central Bank (the equivalent of the Reserve Bank of India) and of the Election Commission, Governors, mayors and senior police officials.

Finally, there is a proposal from NR Narayana Murthy, founder of Infosys and one of the most respected entrepreneurs in the country. And it is both simple and radical: abolish the IAS altogether and replace it with a professional service.

We inherited the civil service from the British. It was called the steel frame and it did a wonderful job in administering and uniting the country. But it has long outlived its role, and even in Britain the civil services have been completely transformed. The time has come for such a change in India. And it must take place fast. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been criticized for being weak and indecisive. Now is the time for him to prove his critics wrong. g

(The writer has been editor of Reader's Digest, The Indian Express *and* The Sunday Observer*)*

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Expropriate the corporators!

Outsourcing municipal functions will bypass the corrupt corporator and improve civic governance

by **Major General Mrinal Suman**

MY mother is 88 years old, perfectly alert and, having been born and brought up in Lahore, always reminisces about "the good old days". Recently, after watching a TV news round-up on a particularly bad and depressing day, she made an extraordinary suggestion: "Our leaders have failed miserably. We should outsource governance to competent foreign or Indian entities on contractual basis. I am not suggesting foreign rule. We should simply outsource governance." The proposition, even if made in jest, reflects the degree of disgust and disenchantment among the people of India. There is no doubt that the political leadership has let the nation down.

People tend to confuse outsourcing and privatization. Privatization entails transfer of property, facilities, services and responsibility from government to a private sector entity. Outsourcing does not involve any such transfer. The functioning of service providers is governed by the provisions of a contract that contains a defined and calibrated system of incentives and penalties.

India has a four-tier governance apparatus – Central government, State government, local self-governing body (commonly referred to as municipality), and village panchayat. Undoubtedly, governance at the Central and State levels cannot be outsourced due to the complexities of legislative and executive functions. Panchayats are meant exclusively for the general welfare of their respective villages. They have a limited charter and are based on the principles of local empowerment. Therefore their functioning can also not be outsourced.

We are left with municipalities. Their sole mandate is to provide essential civic and infrastructural services to their respective towns. Municipal functions lend themselves ideally for outsourcing.

The Jamshedpur model

We have a successful and working model of outsourcing of municipal functions in Jamshedpur, where civic services are provided by a company and not a democratically elected municipal body.

Since the establishment of Jamshedpur town in 1907, all municipal services were handled by the Town Services Division of Tata Steel. In 2004, Jamshedpur Utilities and Services Company (Jusco) was carved out of the Town Services Division and has since provided a complete range of services to the town. In addition to normal municipal services, it oversees planning, engineering and construction-related issues.

The success of the Jusco model can be gauged from the fact that when the Jharkhand government sought public opinion, the people overwhelmingly voted against having a municipal corporation. Apparently, locals abhor the idea of politicians calling the shots.

Profile of a municipal corporator

A municipal corporator is the cause and catalyst of every single ill that afflicts Indian cities. He is a fountainhead of corruption. His sole aim is to amass as much wealth in as short a period as possible. He encourages encroachment on government land to create his vote bank through provision of protection to unauthorized settlements. The proliferation of slums in all cities can be attributed to his political facilitation. He takes money from illegal shops and vendors to save them from eviction. No development work can proceed in a ward unless the local corporator has been suitably rewarded. The collusion of corporator and contractor ensures swelling of their coffers at the cost of development work.

As corporators control local vote banks, they are much sought after by political leaders at State and Central levels. An unholy nexus thus develops wherein the political leader provides protection and patronage to the local corporator for all his illegal activities. In return, the corporator assures vital votes to the political leader.

SHARAD SAXENA

A boulevard in Jamshedpur (above) and a slum in Delhi: can private governance make the difference?

Jamshedpur is one of the cleanest and greenest cities in India, with efficient solid waste management and continuous supply of power and water.

The Jusco model can be easily replicated in other towns. Once demand picks up, numerous other entrepreneurs would enter the field as comprehensive urban service providers, generating competition and improving modalities. As experience is gained, the complete spectrum of community services like water management (including water supply and rainwater harvesting), power distribution, municipal solid waste management, infrastructure, public health, horticulture services and town planning can be easily outsourced to carefully selected service providers with credible track records.

Advantages of outsourcing municipal functions

Reduction in corruption will be the single most important advantage. It is a well documented fact that only a fraction of development funds reaches the public and a substantial part is siphoned off at the local municipal level. During outsourcing, funds would be handled by the district administration and disbursed to service providers as per their performance under the contractual provisions. Exclusion of corporators would save huge funds which otherwise get misappropriated by them. Further, the sizeable expenditure currently incurred on their allowances and perks would be saved.

Encroachment on public land to create slums for captive vote-bank purposes would become very difficult as the clout of local politicians would get considerably reduced. Consequently, the existing nexus between political goons, the patrons and land mafia would lose its stranglehold.

Is outsourcing governance the panacea for all ills that afflict India's body politic and is it a feasible proposal? It is a moot dilemma. Sceptics have reason to be wary. However, outsourcing merits a fair chance to prove itself on account of two persuasive facts.

First, in the World Bank report on the Worldwide Governance Indicators of June 2009, out of 212 countries studied, 50 to 75 per cent have better governance grading than India. It implies that we are already so badly off that chances of further decline are remote. Thus, it is a safe bet to experiment with outsourcing.

Second, a wholly functional and decidedly successful Jusco model provides adequate testimony to the viability of outsourcing of municipal functions. However, as no two towns are similar, it is essential to evolve town-specific outsourcing models to cater for local conditions. Further, as a matter of caution, it will be prudent to proceed in a phased and graduated manner, expanding the scope of outsourced services as experience is gained. g

Chapatti for Re 1 and plate of rice for Rs 2

THE political leaders of the country are not to blame if they are unaware of back-breaking inflation. There are reasons for their ignorance. One is the price at which they are served food in the Parliament House Canteen. If you get fish curry and rice for Rs 13 or chicken curry for Rs 20.50, you are bound to wonder why the people are agitating against a non-existent price rise. There's more – a chapatti and a cup of tea cost Re 1 each while a plate of rice costs a princely Rs 2. For undemanding customers, a vegetarian platter consisting of a dal, a vegetable dish, four chapattis, pulao, curd and salad, is available for Rs 12.50. The irony of such precise pricing of food items – up to 50 paise – cannot be missed when, across the country, prices are rounded off to the nearest tenner.

Food subsidy is meant for underprivileged sections of society. To subsidize food for the most privileged among the elite of the country by taxing the poor is an affront to basic human values.

Temples of

Expansion of university education is a prerequisite for I

by **Vijay Sanghvi**

The Chinese government is way ahead of India in attending to its future education needs. In 10 years, it has doubled its universities from 1,122 to 2,263.

IN the coming decade, a major challenge for the Manmohan Singh government is the expansion of university education in order to churn out nearly 40 million graduates a year. This would keep the pace of economic growth that can help India outrun China as the emerging super economic power. The government would have to cover nearly 30 per cent of the student population rather than the current 12 per cent. More world-class universities would have to be set up in the next five years. This is a formidable challenge because the work would involve not merely allocation of funds but active planning for selection of sites, construction of campuses, and mobilization of first-rate faculty. India would also need to transform its approach and curriculum, so far attuned to churning out technocrats who can be directly absorbed by the industry. The new curriculum would need to aim at fostering leadership and capacity for innovation and research.

The Chinese government is way ahead of India in attending to its future education needs. In the past 10 years, it has virtually doubled its universities from 1,122 to 2,263. However, China's expanding university education lacks multi-discipline breadth and critical thinking that fosters leadership and aptitude for research. Japan, on the other hand, already has a wide network of universities that can meet the challenge of the West. Korea is also implementing a programme to ensure that Korean students do not need to look outside the country for university education.

The scene of action has gradually shifted to the Asian countries because of the potential for rapid economic growth and these nations' desire to stand on their own feet. These countries also need to adopt their own systems, more suited to their culture and aptitude.

For two decades, Western universities have remained economically viable because nearly half their students are from Asia – paying fees four times what is charged from the local students and thus subsidizing the latter's education.

A drop in foreign students owing to world-class university education being available at home and at less cost would affect Western universities' financial health. Their governments are economical in allocation of funds. Some of them have already taken the initiative to establish campuses in Asian countries. Their first preference seems to be China.

Australia made a bid to turn its universities into an industry by offering facilities to Asian students. But the racial attitude of their young generation put paid to this effort even before it could take off. Neither was the Australian government's attitude helpful. Many of its Ministers could not reconcile to the thought that Asian students could be brighter than their own.

India has a wide base and a wealth of world-class teachers. India's teachers have worked with Western universities for nine decades. Given a proper climate and facilities, Indian teachers would not be averse to returning to India. In fact, they need to look for fresh pastures because the growth of the West has already reached saturation point.

But, as Robin B Levin, president of Yale University, has pointed out, setting up world-class universities is a tall order.

new India

or India's economic growth

India's IIMs and IITs have earned a reputation for themselves in the world. This is reflected in the hordes of recruitment managers from multinationals.

It is not just a question of buildings and campuses. It also involves assemblage of a large number of qualified teachers and trainers. His opinion was expressed in articles published in Hong Kong, Singapore and Shanghai newspapers after his recent visit to these places.

India has an advantage because of its IIMs and IITs that have earned a reputation for themselves in the world. This is reflected in the hordes of recruitment managers of multinationals who mop up the entire talent from India every year. Even they have noticed a change – many of their recruits prefer India as a work station rather than the US or Europe. Gradually, students from other developing nations have been looking towards India for educational facilities. So India has the potential to turn its education facilities into a thriving new industry.

THE question is whether Indian bureaucrats can take up this challenge. Do they have the vision to meet the challenge that cannot be ignored if we are to stay in the race against China and other Asian nations in economic development and be a leader in our own right? The recent moves and legislation are laudable. However, there are no viable plans to expand education facilities so that they are easily available. More important is the challenge to provide quality education at primary and secondary level so that universities can turn young minds into what is required for the larger interest.

Since Independence, India has followed the education pattern bequeathed by the British without new orientation to meet the changing social and economic needs of the country. The British wanted educated graduates to carry out clerical work. In the 21st century, India has different requirements. Unless we improve the quality of primary and secondary education, it may not be possible to meet the challenge of numbers.

Experience has shown that the private sector is not a dependable ally for the government as it tends to view educational institutes as profit shops rather than centres for providing quality education. The number of MBA institutes that flourish even in ruralia without adequate and qualified teaching staff, while handing out diploma certificates after the customary 18 months, tell a sad tale of private sector involvement in expansion of education. The government's education department could not even work out a proper monitoring mechanism to ensure that students were not taken up the garden path with promises of a better economic future.

Philanthropist industrial houses with aims of establishing quality educational institutes in the country have done their bit but of late new industrial houses with less lofty perceptions have taken the front row. They figure in the Fortune 500 lists but have not moved in the direction of establishing any educational institute worth a name. Their objectives were merely profit-making. That leaves the formidable task of development to the government.

Expansion of education facilities is far more than brick and mortar, it involves building of minds and attitudes. It requires even more focused attention. It is for the Prime Minister to lead the race and win it for India. g

Dhumal's Adani

The unholy nexus between the Chief Minister and a Guja ra

by **NN Dhiman**

HIMACHAL Pradesh is being rocked by scandalous allegations of illegal favours given by Chief minister Prem Kumar Dhumal to Gautam Adani. The Gujarati business tycoon, whose proximity to Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi is no secret, has in the recent past used his political clout to bag some major infrastructure contracts. It was Modi who introduced Adani to Dhumal and put in a good word for him.

Such is Adani's clout in the BJP that, despite the State vigilance department highlighting the nexus between the industrialist, State government officials and Netherlands-based firm Brakel in the allotment of two mega power projects in Himachal Pradesh – the Jhangi Thopan and Thopan Powari projects of 480 MW each – he still elicits strongly-worded support from the State BJP government. The vigilance department reported largescale irregularities in awarding the two power projects to a consortium led by Brakel Corporation NV – which was a front company of the Adani Group. The IT department investigation found that Brakel had no past experience in execution of power projects, and both companies lacked the financial strength to bid for the Rs 6,000-crore projects and execute them. The companies existed only on paper. A subsequent report by then Power Secretary Ajay Mittal also found glaring irregularities in the allotment of the projects to Brakel. But the Dhumal government steamrollered all these reports and went ahead with the allotment in October 2005.

Later, after a High Court judgement, the allotment was cancelled. But the Dhumal government did not initiate any action against Adani. Meanwhile, implementation of the projects has been delayed by almost five years. The Director, Energy, and Secretary, Law, of the HP government have reported that the State has suffered revenue loss of over Rs 931.25 crore due to the delay in implementation of these two power projects.

In October 2005, the Himachal Pradesh government initiated the bidding process for selection of developers for various hydro projects, including Jhangi Thopan (480 MW), Thopan Powari (480 MW) and Kutehr (260 MW). Brakel emerged the top-ranked bidder with Reliance second for both Jhangi Thopan and Thopan Powari while in the case of Kutehr it was DSC Himal and JSW Energy who were

Notwithstanding the findings of vigilance and tax investigators, a State government committee headed by Chief Secretary Asha Swaroop (left) suggested the go-ahead for the allotment of the two projects.

The vigilance department reported largescale irregularities in awarding the two power projects to a consortium led by Brakel Corporation NV – which was a front company of the Adani Group.

Brakel project (left) and (below, left to right) Dhumal, Modi, Adani: what are friends for?

PIB

PIB

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a rat-based industrialist has created a stir in the hill state

number one and two, respectively. The successful bidders were required to deposit 50 per cent of the premium amount quoted in the bid immediately after issue of LOIs. But Brakel and DSC Himal failed to make the payment despite showcause notices issued by the State government. In July 2007, the State government cancelled the allotment of the Kutehr project to DSC Himal but decided to give Brakel more time. To avoid delay in project implementation, the government also decided to allot the Kutehr project to JSW Energy, who offered to match the DSC Himal bid, instead of floating another tender.

Brakel failed to deposit the amount despite another showcause notice. The government still did not cancel the allotment. In the meantime, the state vigilance dept, IT dept and the Power Secretary submitted their damning reports. The vigilance department found that infirmities were created in the bid document, whereby the lead member of a consortium was not required to have any substantial financial standing. Hence, financial marks were awarded to Brakel on the strength of Standard Bank, one of the partners in the consortium. But there was no definite commitment of equity participation by Standard Bank. The very basis of the assessment of Brakel's financial strength was wholly without evidence. None of the other consortium members had committed any specific equity participation and since Brakel itself had no equity, no marks should have been awarded to it for financial strength.

Brakel finally paid the upfront premium of Rs 173 crore. This sum allegedly came from the Adani Group. The latter has over 250 cases pending against it with Customs, Income Tax, Excise DRI and the CBI. It never committed to becoming a member of the consortium and initially was not shown as one.

Notwithstanding the findings of vigilance and tax investigators, a State government committee headed by Chief Secretary Asha Swaroop suggested the go-ahead for the allotment of the two projects to Brakel.

Finally, it was due to the intervention of the High Court that the allotment was cancelled. The court also ordered forfeit of the deposit money amounting to Rs 280 crore for causing loss to the state exchequer due to the delay in implementation of the projects.

Brakel went to the Supreme Court, challenging the cancellation and seeking re-allotment of the projects. The matter is still pending in the Supreme Court. Shockingly, the Dhumal government is still protecting the Adani Group and has justified the allotment of the projects to Brakel in its recently filed affidavit in the case. The government has even justified the financial help extended by Adani to Brakel, saying any company is free to take loans from anywhere. g

After a High Court judgement, the allotment was cancelled. But the Dhumal government did not initiate action against Adani. Meanwhile, implementation of the projects has been delayed for five years.

b ashok

MONKEYING I

How the apes influence o

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Besides, when we were trainees in 1998, quite a few lady trainees complained of regular loss of costly underwear left out to dry. In those days we did not have launderettes in the hostels.

OUR verdant Mussoorie campus is cohabited (along with officers, trainers and trainees) by around 400 rhesus monkeys. They are everywhere, foraging from dinner leftovers, fruit trees and even residential litter boxes. Most are of rhesus variety – the ugly yellow grey ones; and some are langurs – the black-faced taller ones. They are protected by the Wildlife Act and rhesus monkeys are also revered as descendants of Hanuman by the local populace. These factors work in their favour and all attempts by the Academy to relocate them or control their occasional misbehaviour have been wasted.

The 300-odd rhesus monkeys are also divided into three or four constantly warring clans, each led by a vicious chieftain. My first encounter with a large adult sparring chieftain was awesome. We had recently moved into our residence behind Kalindi Guest House and I was rushing down the stairs for a meeting. Hey presto! – as in Kalyanasougandhikam, there he sits at the head of the stairs, ignoring my shooing or pleadings to give way. Optionless, I lifted a broken brick and aimed. He snarled and glared, showing his canines, and turned around in full ambush posture. His war cry is still ringing in my ears. Responding calls poured out from atop the water tanks. I barely escaped with my shirt on. Since then I keep an air rifle, which seems to have an impact on the clan, and use it very often to clear the way.

Generally, monkey chiefs spare adults unless you get caught in the crossfire when the clans are fighting ferociously! If the chieftain is securing his exclusive access to the choice female under challenge, well, even if you are adult, they may spring on you, mistaking you to be an additional challenger.

Observing them brings to my mind the theory of my esteemed trainee from Haryana, explaining most of the ills in our system. It can be called the theory of the *"jhavad bandar"*. I had the good fortune to travel with this worldlywise gentleman to the US and back on training. Naturally, officers discuss the ills of politicians, the "system", and so on. For every ill conclusively identified, our gentleman would retort, with a loud drool on his glass of scotch: "*Sirjee, sab jhavad bandar ki kahani hai* (All this is the story of the chieftain monkey)." He would explain the dominating strategies of the *jhavad* vis-a-vis the females, and conclude: "*Sab unke hain, aur baki sab sirf thali bajatey rehtey hain* (The winner takes all, the rest remain clapping)."

After an extended stay in Europe dur-

[N MUSSOORIE

e our future administrators

ing which I witnessed the historic Ivrea carnival near Milan, I can understand what he meant. Ivrea is a small town where the custom of Prima Nocta (the first post-marriage night of every virgin being claimed by the local feudal lord) was challenged by one Violetta who resisted him and beheaded the lord. To celebrate this, Ivreans dress up like agents of the feudal lord, roam around in horse-drawn decorated carts and pelt one another with ripe oranges on the appointed winter day. Around seven million oranges are pelted by sunset!

Among the more mundane pranks of the monkeys is flicking innocuous things with serious consequences. A pair of my trousers turned up in the washed pile of our neighbours, the Chopras. In fact, Mr Chopra discovered this when he tried to wear the trousers and found he had space for more than himself! Fortunately, all of us are very understanding husbands and wives, and promptly blamed the monkeys for the trouser switch. But for the monkeys, I cannot imagine how I would have answered Preeti on how my trousers cannot keep themselves to our wardrobe!

BESIDES, when we were trainees in 1998, quite a few lady trainees complained of regular loss of costly underwear left out to dry. In those days we did not have launderettes in the hostels. The gentlemen of the services cannot be stealing women's underwear, though I have met quite a few queers fond of flicking many a strange thing!

It is not funny all the time. A couple of children of faculty members were mauled and had to undergo vaccination. There was pressure on me, then in charge of estates, to control the menace. We explored options. We located a firm of monkey controllers / catchers. One hitch stopped the operation. The firm said it would charge a few thousand rupees per day of operation, irrespective of the number of monkeys caught and transported away into jungles. Our finance adviser would not accept this. The firm had to be paid even if no monkey was caught. He wanted a "per monkey foolproof quote" while the firm wouldn't have any of it. The *"jhavad bandars"* had their lucky day and were free to run amok again.

Then, my colleague and friend, Rajesh Aryaji, had an innovative high-tech plan to instal an ultrasound scare near the faculty and OT residences. But the effect on human health of this gadgetry is under study since what is scary for monkeys cannot be totally harmless for humans, with their being 99.5 per cent genetically related to us. (Aryaji corrects me that some prankster probationers are 150 per cent related.) Some faculty members feel that trainees are challenging enough without any prospective ultrasound-induced mutations!

Seriously, the Academy is a place where we have to throw the monkeys on our backs away and come out of our comfort zones. Weightlessness to fly high is the aim, freedom in thinking and action comes through freeing the binds and comfort zones of the mind. Monkeys, *jhavad* and lowly, add to the challenge and remind us of the fluidity of the world we inhabit. Let them be, let us be, and let us keep learning from each other. g

(The writer is Private Secretary to the Minister of State for Agriculture and was earlier deputy director of the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie.)

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arun l bongirwar

'Bureaucrats have to adjust to the political mindset'

A former Chief Secretary recalls how the seeds of innovative people's schemes were planted at the outset of his career

I HAIL from a family of bureaucrats. My father was an IAS officer in Maharashtra and my grandfather was a school inspector. I began my career as Super Numerary Assistant Collector in Ratnagiri district collectorate. A first posting in Ratnagiri was rare. In my very first posting I learned how the Konkan people interacted with the government machinery. They were very meticulous. Initially, they would list their grievances or problems. After failing to evoke a response from the administration, they would send a Red Letter, a letter written in red ink, a reminder.

Three or four months into my assignment, the Koyna earthquake struck. It wreaked havoc in the tehsils of Chiplun in Ratnagiri district and also the neighbouring Satara and Patan tehsils. My immediate bosses were the Konkan Division Commissioner, GA Sharma, and the Ratnagiri district Collector, Mandlekar.

One of the biggest challenges was communication. The government relied only on faxes. To make a long-distance call, we had to book a trunk call as there was no direct connection with the state administrative headquarters. If you sent one person to the nearest administrative headquarters just to seek a directive or help, you had to wait for him to return.

But the calamity made us work through the circumstances. I learnt team work.

Sharma told me to leave for Mumbai and arrange for transport of bread. It was my first interaction with the Relief and Rehabilitation Secretary, MW Desai. I was struck by his ability to take spot decisions.

It was then I realized the power and speed of the administrative machinery. Sharma was posted in Mumbai. He promptly called up Modern Bakery and arranged to send three truckloads of bread to Chiplun. In such circumstances, the test of the government lies in taking quick and effective decisions.

After that I was posted as Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) at Dahanu in Thane district. The *adivasi*s were an exploited lot. It was incumbent on the government officers to determine the price of the trees upon which the *adivasi*s depended for their livelihood. Often, young trees were felled or the ignorant tribals were paid less for their produce. The government's aim was to ensure the tribals got the due price.

There was food scarcity. Thane district was known for its paddy. During my stint there, I learned of rampant smuggling of rice to neighbouring states like Gujarat. One night, my

Milestones

In my long career, I worked with several Chief Ministers. I was at the helm of the State administration when the political administration changed. But I did not encounter problems of adjustment with any Chief Minister because all of them had a vision of doing something good for Maharashtra. I was Secretary to Congress Chief Minister Sudhakarrao Naik, to Shiv Sena Chief Minister Manohar Joshi, his Sena successor, Narayan Rane, Congress CM Vilasrao Deshmukh. As a Divisional Commissioner, you are in direct contact with the Chief Minister. I was Pune Divisional Commissioner when Sharad Pawar was Chief Minister, I was Aurangabad Divisional Commissioner when Shankarrao Chavan was Chief Minister.

When God distributed wisdom He did not give Biharis or South Indians more, He distributed it equally to one and all. The opportunities are there.

team and I laid a trap for these rice smugglers at Manor and nabbed a huge consignment of rice on its way to Gujarat.

My next posting was at Akola. The posting after that, in 1978, as District Collector of undivided Osmanabad and Latur districts was challenging. It gave me great satisfaction to see the smiles on the faces of the people after the problem of drinking water shortage was tackled. The government approved laying of temporary water supply pipes until permanent ones were laid. The expenditure for the district exceeded the total for the rest of the districts of Marathwada region.

During my subsequent posting in Aurangabad as Revenue Commissioner in 1986, I got a chance to make a real impact on the government's functioning. I was asked to head a team of District Collectors to look into the administration's problems. In six months or so we submitted our report. A major recommendation was creation of the post of Assistant District Collector, which you now see in every district. It helped a lot in reducing the workload of the District Collector.

My second most influential study report was on why there are very few IAS aspirants in Maharashtra. There was a major debate in the Maharashtra Assembly over why there were very few Maharashtrian officers in the State cadre. In my time, out of the 15 officers who entered the State cadre, only Pandit Kavde, Lalit Doshi, S Habeebullah, Shailaja Chandra and I were from Maharashtra.

The government set up a committee headed by me and comprising MLAs like Nitin Raut, Fauzia Khan (both Ministers in the Ashok Chavan Cabinet), Subhash Desai and Ashok Modak. We visited divisional headquarters like Nagpur, Aurangabad, Ratnagiri and Mumbai.

Our field visits were widely publicized; it was then that youngsters got to know not just about the IAS but also about other cadres like the IPS, the Forest Service, the Foreign Service, the financial Services and so on. It was not just ignorance, there were also doubts like "Should I appear for the UPSC exam", "will I pass it", "will I get the Maharashtra cadre".

The last five years have seen an increase in the number of aspirants from Maharashtra. Awareness has spread in rural Maharashtra. In Mumbai, the youth tends to opt for more cushy private sector jobs. But, overall, the trend has reversed. There are good institutes like Chanakya Mandal of Avinash Dharmadhikari, CD Deshmukh institute in Thane, Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA) in Pune and State Institute for Administrative Careers in Mumbai.

One of the major problems for the youth in Maharashtra was that books for the UPSC exam were not readily available and were also costly. So we recommended that YASHADA digitize them and make them available online. It is said the administration is overrun with Bihari and South Indian officers. But when God distributed wisdom He did not give Biharis or South Indians more, He distributed it equally to

Road development in rural Maharashtra (above) and scenes from the Koyna quake (right): challenges never ended

one and all. The opportunities are there, one only has to let go of negative mindsets.

When I became Chief Secretary, I introduced another innovative concept – that of *Lokshahi Din* under which major heads of departments under the collectorate jointly listened to public grievances once a month. It struck me that, in rural parts of the State, government officials often neglected or simply ignored public grievances. Or, if the official was corrupt, he would tend to ignore the complaint until his palm was greased. There was direct interaction between the person and the government official, with no one to check what had happened. It depended on the attitude of the officer.

I SUGGESTED that heads of major departments like the District Collector, Superintendent of Police, and Executive Engineers of the Maharashtra State Electricity Board (MSEB) and the Public Works Department (PWD) should hear grievances once a month. When people complained about a certain official not solving their problem, and in front of his superiors, he had to take action.

The whole thing set off a chain reaction, because of the presence of the District Collector at such *janata durbar*s. The Collector kept a tab on the developments and reviewed progress at the next meeting. Enthused by its success, the Chief Minister also picked up the idea and started the *Lokshahi Din* in Mantralaya. But, as time passed, our survey found that almost 70-80 per cent of those who came for these *Lokshahi Din*s were government officials seeking transfers, promotions or postings. The rest had genuine problems that they wanted the Mantralaya mandarins to solve.

To stop this flow of people to Mantralaya with their grievances, I started the *Palak Sachiv* (Guardian Secretary) concept at the district level. A bureaucrat who had previously worked

Three or four months into my assignment, the Koyna earthquake struck. It wreaked havoc in the tehsils of Chiplun in Ratnagiri district.

in a particular district would be made its Guardian Secretary. He would try to resolve problems at the local level. Since he had colleagues in Mantralaya, he could take up pending issues and get them resolved. This left the District Collector free to tackle other pressing issues.

Despite technological advances, the bureaucracy and administration has remained more or less the same. I was Chief Secretary from May 1999 till January 2001. My style of functioning was different, as is the case with my successors like the current incumbent, JP Dange.

The Maharashtra bureaucracy has remained more or less insulated from any change of political guard in the State. That is because politicians across the ideological spectrum know the bureaucrats' style of functioning. Ultimately, what matters is integrity and merit.

Bureaucrats have to adjust to the mindset of the political establishment ruling the State. I do not subscribe to the view that Maharashtra has lagged in terms of progress because of lack of bureaucrats or any other reason. The image of Maharashtra in Delhi is not that of a quiet, docile State. It has devised many path-breaking schemes like the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS), which has now been adopted by the Centre and rechristened as NREGS. And Maharashtra's share in allocation of Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) funds is greater than any other State. g

(As told to Prashant Hamine)

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From the Editor-in-Chief

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High-intensity crossfire has led to emergency intervention by the PMs office

by NARESH MINOCHA

THE never-ending challenge of managing air waves and conflicting aspirations of fiercely competitive cellular telephone operators is ... time is not just sparks but fireworks ... Minister's Office (PMO) to intervene. And, the fireworks have not been set off by Telecom Minister A Raja but by Telecom Regulatory Aut ...More

GOVERNANCE | law enforcement | interrogation methods

DARKNESS AT NOON

Does the Supreme Court ban on brain map... deny interrogators scientific tools?

by COL R HARIHARAN

A half-naked man is hung upside down and a police officer is beating him with an iron rod. Though this typical movie scene is often over-dramatized, it is not far from the truth. The police regularly uses violence and torture to extract "confessions" from suspects despite knowing full well it is illegal. They have even evolved "special t ...More

MANDARIN MATTERS | transfer policies

No easy escape

Th... ...ve m... ...to ... ...nst IAS and IPS off... ...to sit tr... ...to tough areas

by NARESH MINOCHA

THERE are now stringent new guidelines for transfer and posting of officials of the cadre that cater to Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram , the UTs, Andaman & Nicobar (A&N) Islands, Chandigarh, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Delhi, Lakshadweep and Puducherry. These States and UTs are classified into three categories: A – ...More

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by ABHILAKSH LIKHI

DOORDARSHAN, the host broadcaster for the Delhi Commonwealth Games (3-14 October, 2010), will be responsible for producing and distributing objective and unbiased television and radio coverage of the event. For the first time in India, the coverage will be in the high definition format conducive to superior viewing quality on television. The coverage will ...More

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This one-act play captures the archetypal kvetching t ...More

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INSIDE THE GOVERNMENT

Be selective, jettison dud stocks

THE markets have more than doubled in the past 15 months and are staying at a high whereas a majority of investors are hoping for a correction. However, as big bull Rakesh Jhunjhunwala said, the correction never happens when it is expected most or when a majority of the investors (especially retail) expect it to happen. The markets, though, have started showing signs of fatigue as evidenced by the redemption pressure in equity funds. Fearing a correction, investors in diversified equity funds redeemed close to Rs 4,000 crore in June and July. Equity mutual funds have witnessed an outflow exceeding Rs 11,000 crore over the past year.

Investors' concerns are amply documented by the recently released annual report of the RBI which states that inflation containment may have to be given precedence over other policy objectives – economic growth and financial stability – even as domestic risks to growth have receded significantly due to gradual pick-up in private consumption demand that could accelerate to make the growth process more self-sustaining. This fuels speculation that the RBI may soon raise interest rates.

The report has also hinted at a possible slowdown in future growth with data indicating that reforms have done little to raise productivity. It cautioned that better-than-expected revenues from the one-off gains such as spectrum auctions are unlikely to improve the country's fiscal situation as new avenues of expenditure have emerged. The perception about global recovery has also turned adverse which is not giving investors the comfort and confidence to buy stocks.

The purchases of existing houses in the US fell by a record 27 per cent in July to a 3.83 million annual pace which is the lowest of the decade and worse than the most pessimistic forecast of economists surveyed by Bloomberg. This, coupled with slowing export growth in Japan, added to the evidence that the global economic recovery is weakening.

The persistent foreign fund inflows have already made Indian equities the most expensive amongst Asian and BRIC markets. The Sensex is trading at 18 times the expected profits for the current year. Easy money supply and very low rates of interest are mainly driving capital to the emerging markets. Given India's potential, recovery in capital inflows has been much faster than predicted. The inflow from abroad reached a record Rs 83,420 crore in 2009, exceeding the high set two years ago.

The other more traditional and crude pointer to the markets being due for a correction is the steep run-up in the prices of dud stocks and stocks of loss-making companies without any justifiable reasons. Also, the fact that things like capital protected schemes have again come into vogue may be yet another pointer to the fact that fund managers and brokers feel that share valuations are expensive relative to their historical averages and the risk of a sharp correction is high given the uncertainty prevalent in the world markets.

In such a scenario, small investors are advised to defer fresh investments in the market for the time being and use the ongoing rally to get rid of the dud and risky stocks that have run up a lot without any apparent reason. Only very selective investments in fundamentally good stocks of companies with good managements need be considered, provided their valuations justify such an action.

The other more traditional and crude pointer to the markets being due for a correction is the steep run-up in the prices of stocks of loss-making companies.

Sonata Software

(CMP Rs 44)

SONATA Software, headquartered in Bengaluru, is a leading IT consulting and services company. Its customers are located across the US, Europe, West Asia and the Asia-Pacific region. Its portfolio of services includes IT consulting, product engineering services, travel solutions, application development, application management, managed testing, business intelligence, infrastructure management and packaged applications. As per industry rankings released by NASSCOM for FY '08-09, Sonata Software figured among the top 20 IT software and service exporters in India for the second consecutive year. Sonata Software has also been ranked number two globally in the 2008 Top Ten ESO: Outsourced Software Development in the Black Book of Outsourcing.

The stand-alone results of the company for Q1 is reported to be up by 15 per cent to Rs 63 crore with EBIDTA up by 12 per cent to Rs 18 crore. The net profit for the quarter increased by 11 per cent to Rs 5.65 crore though the consolidated results were not all that encouraging. The widely perceived European exposure may not be a strong negative for the stock. With an EPS of Rs 6 the CMP is discounted at a PE of just seven times. The stock also offers a good dividend yield of approximately 4 per cent. g

The author has no exposure in the stock recommended in this column. gfiles *does not accept responsibility for investment decisions by readers of this column. Investment-related queries may be sent to gfilesindia@gmail.com with Dr Sood's name in the subject line.*

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T NAND KUMAR
The 1972-batch IAS officer of the Jharkhand cadre is now Member, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister.

R GOPALAKRISHNAN
The 1979-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has become Member-Secretary of the National Innovation Council.

HARSHDEEP SHRIRAM KAMBLE
The 1997-batch IAS officer of the Maharashtra cadre is now PS to the Union Minister for Social Justice.

MIRA MEHRISHI
The 1979-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre has become Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forest.

PK DASH
The 1981-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has been appointed Principal Secretary, Commerce and Industries.

RAVI MATHUR
The 1979-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre is now Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Labour.

ASHOK LAVASA
The 1980-batch IAS officer of the Haryana cadre has become Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Power.

RAKESH SINGH
The 1989-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre has joined as PS to the Union Law and Justice Minister.

ARVIND KUMAR
The 1988-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre is now Joint Secretary, Ministry of I&B.

AJAY LAL
The 1987-batch IFS officer of the Himachal Pradesh cadre has joined the SAARC Forestry Centre in Thimphu, Bhutan.

THOMAS MATHEW
The 1983-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary in the Department of Economic Affairs.

ASHISH UPADHYAYA
The 1989-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has been empanelled for appointment as Joint Secretary.

JATINDRA NATH SWAIN
The 1988-batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre has been empanelled to the rank of Joint Secretary in the Government of India.

MUKTESH PARDESHI
The 1991-batch IFS officer has been posted in the MEA as Joint Secretary (PSP) in the CPV Division.

AK PANDA
The 1984-batch IAS officer of the Orissa cadre is now Joint Secretary, Health and Family Welfare.

SHAILENDRA SINGH
The 1988-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre has been empanelled to the rank of Joint Secretary.

BP SHARMA
The 1981-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre has become Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

RASHMI VERMA
The 1982-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre has been appointed Joint Secretary, Defence Production.

AMIT NARANG
The 2001-batch IFS officer has been posted in the MEA as Deputy Secretary in the UNES Division.

L FANAI
The 1997-batch IAS officer of the Uttarakhand cadre is now Deputy Secretary, Rural Development.

AJAY KUMAR
The 2002-batch IFS officer has joined the MEA as Under Secretary in the DISA Division.

P GOPINATH
The 1977-batch IPos officer has been appointed Member Secretary, Tariff Commission.

VINOD KUMAR
The Joint Secretary has been appointed High Commissioner to Fiji.

RAJIVA MISRA
The Joint Secretary has been appointed Ambassador to the Slovak Republic.

Moving On: ias officers retiring in September 2010

BIHAR
Niranjan K Choudhari (1995)
Prabhat Kumar Sah (1995)
HIMACHAL PRADESH
Subhash Chander Negi (1978)
MAHARASHTRA
M Ramesh Kumar (1975)
Ranjana Sinha (1975)
NB Patil (1977)
MANIPUR-TRIPURA
H Devasekhar Sharma (1984)
PUNJAB
Ashok Kumar Goel (1988)
Jasbir Singh Bir (1989)
Kulbir Singh (1990)
RAJASTHAN
SS Rajvi (1987)
UTTAR PRADESH
Amal Kumar Verma (1976)
Rama Kant Shukla (1994)
Charanjit Singh Bakshi (1996)
UNION TERRITORY
Rajinder Singh Sethi (1973)
Nita Bali (1974)
RK Saxena (1990)
WEST BENGAL
Bijoy Chatterjee (1973)
Bimal Pande (1974)

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DEBABRATA SAHA
The Ambassador in Kyiv has been appointed Ambassador to Italy.

ANAND BARDHAN
The 1982-batch IAS officer of the Uttarakhand cadre is now Director in the Department of Overseas Indian Affairs.

JAWAID AKHTAR
The 1989-batch IAS officer of the Karnataka cadre is now Chairman of the Coffee Board.

R MUKUNDAN
The 1984-batch IRPS officer has been appointed ED (Establishment) in the Railway board.

RANJANESH SAHAI
The 1985-batch IRAS officer has been posted as Executive Director under Chairman, Railway Board.

ASHOK KUMAR VERMA
The 1986-batch IAS officer of the Bihar cadre who is Joint Director, IB, has been transferred from Jammu to Delhi.

PRAHLAD KUMAR SINHA
The 1984-batch IP&TA&FS has been appointed Chief Vigilance Officer in the Damodar Valley Corporation, Kolkata.

DINESH SHARMA
The 1983-batch IAS officer of the Kerala cadre is now CEO, Price Stabilization Fund Trust under the Ministry of Commerce.

ATULYA MISHRA
The 1988-batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre has been appointed Chairman of the Chennai Port Trust.

ASHWANI KUMAR
The 1992-batch IAS officer of the AGMUT cadre, who is Director and Staff Officer to the Home Secretary, has been selected for training at Duke University, US.

SARVESH RAI
The 1991-batch IFS officer of the J&K cadre has joined the Government of India as Director, Agriculture.

KS KROPHA
The 1982-batch IAS officer of the Assam-Meghalaya cadre is now Principal Secretary to the CM of Meghalaya.

CD SINGH
The 1987-batch IFS officer of the Union Territory cadre has been selected for the post of DIG in the MEA.

AMIT SINGLA
The 2003-batch IAS officer of the AGMUT cadre has joined as Deputy Commissioner, North-West Delhi.

NARESH MOHAN JHA
The 1996-batch ICAS officer has joined as Director in the Department of Economic Affairs.

K JOHN KOSHY
The 1975-batch retired IAS officer has been appointed Information Commissioner in West Bengal.

PK MISHRA
The 1976-batch IAS officer of the UP cadre has become Secretary, Steel.

DEVENDRA SINGH CHAUHAN
The 1988-batch IPS officer of the Bihar cadre is now IG, SSB in Patna.

ALKA PANDA
The 1983-batch IAS officer of the Orissa cadre is now Deputy Director General, Bureau of Indian Standards.

N MURUGANANDAM
The 1991-batch IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre is now PS to the Union Minister of Shipping.

PRADNYA SARWADE
The 1989-batch IPS officer of the Maharashtra cadre is now Executive Director in the Securities and Exchange Board of India.

RAVI SHANKAR
The 1994-batch IPS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has been appointed as DIG, NIA in Hyderabad.

RK MEENA
The 1995-batch IPS officer of the Andhra Pradesh cadre has become Director of anti-Naxalite management in the Ministry of Home Affairs.

KC MEENA
The 1988-batch IPS officer of the West Bengal cadre has been promoted as Joint Director in the Intelligence Bureau.

AMULYA PATNAIK
The 1985-batch IPS officer of the Union Territory cadre has been appointed JCP, Southern Range, in Delhi Police.

V RANGNATHAN
The 1992-batch IPS officer of the AGMUT cadre, SP, CID, the Andamans islands, has been transferred from the Andamans to New Delhi.

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Like Minister, like Secretary

THE famous trickle-down effect is so very apparent in the Ministry of civil aviation. Recently, when a computer company sought a special package from Air India for its employees, the airline refused as it was not in a position to grant it. To the firm's unending delight, the Secretary, Civil Aviation, M Madhavan Nambiar, intervened and its wish was fulfilled. That Air India lost a few lakhs of rupees in the process, is irrelevant.

When the deal was finalized, Air India officials were naturally curious as to why the Secretary pursued it with such interest. They discovered that his daughter works for the company. Once the deal was through, she was posted in London by way of reward. Ahem.

Skulduggery in the IDBI

SINCE Yogesh Agarwal became chairman of the Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority in July, he has been busy trying to remote control the IDBI. He was earlier IDBI Chairman and spawned quite a few controversies over sanction of loans.

It is said that he had a deal with two industrial houses, one with interest in civil aviation and the liquor business and the other in wind power. One allegedly received substantial funding from IDBI in violation of prudent financing norms while the other secured debt restructuring to the substantial detriment of IDBI's interests. Under the deal, Agarwal would be installed as Deputy Governor of the RBI and he would ensure BK Batra's promotion as Deputy Managing Director of IDBI.

These plans were doused by the then Finance Secretary, Arun Ramanathan, whom Agarwal had rubbed the wrong way in the first meeting of the IDBI board. However, Agarwal's proximity to an important official in Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee's office secured him the PFRDA post. He has been frequently visiting the official to get Batra appointed DMD of IDBI by flouting the eligibility norms which stipulate that only an ED with at least two years' tenure will be considered for promotion. Batra had only one-and-a-half years to his credit at the time of the interview. Dozens of complaints landed in the CVC's office but were ignored because, well, the CVC's son was taken care of in the IDBI by Agarwal and Batra.

Cold war over SEBI post

NORTH Block's two most powerful offices are at loggerheads. The conflict stems from the tussle for appointment of each's candidate as chief of the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The term of the present incumbent, CB Bhave, is ending and a high-level appointment

panel, headed by Cabinet Secretary KM Chandrasekhar, has been constituted. There are several contenders for the coveted post, from State Bank of India chief OP Bhatt and National Stock Exchange chief Ravi Narayan to Finance Ministry officer KP Krishnan, who is now part of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Panel.

Bhave was part of P Chidambaram's team when the latter was Finance Minister. When the change of guard took place in the Finance Ministry, the scenario altered. Though, when it came to the National Stock Exchange (NSE), the old coterie was controlling it through MD and CEO Ravi Narain and Pranabda could do little as NSE is a private body. Now the race is on to grab the SEBI chief's post. A top official in South Block who belongs to the old school and is a Ravi Narain patron has also joined the cold war. Watch this space.

Penniless, but castles in the air

GOING by the inertia of the National Disaster Management Authority, the recent cloudbursts in Ladakh and Uttarakhand are apparently not disasters. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is its Chairman while Gen NC Vij is Vice-Chairman. The NDMA is active only on its website and in files. Gen Vij has no funds to tackle disasters, yet he apparently dreams of creating a parallel system for disaster management rather than attempting to use the available infrastructure.

ILLUSTRATIONS: ARUNA

Gen Vij's term ends in September and the hunt is on for a senior bureaucrat who will fit the bill. g

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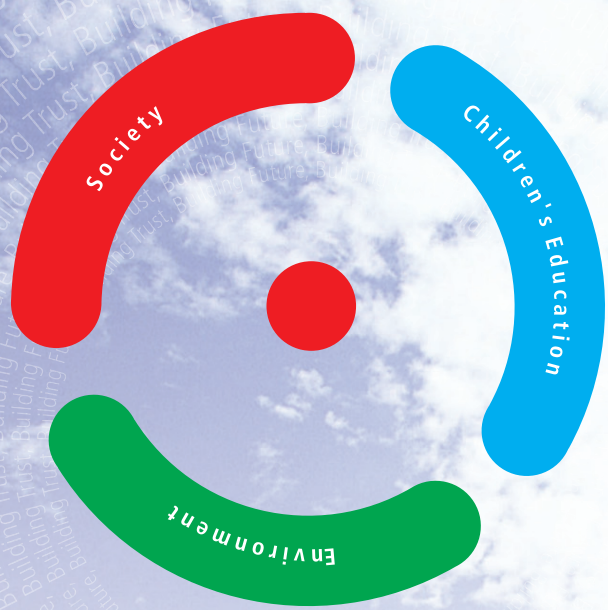

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